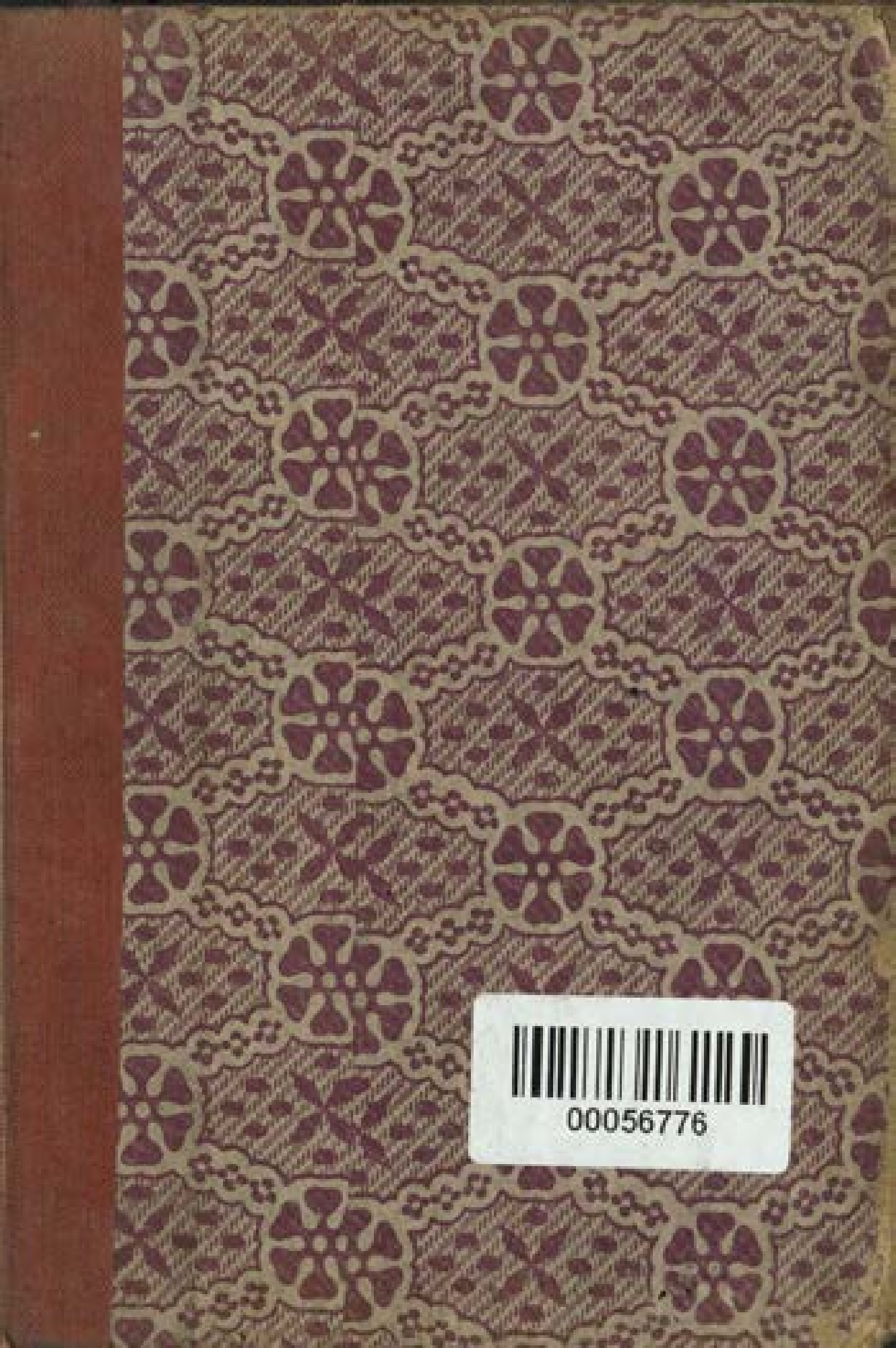
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TRE CIMA TOSA.

Nella Val di Brenta

ITALIAN ALPS

SKETCHES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TICINO, LOMBARDY, THE TRENTINO, AND VENETIA

56776
ac.

BY

DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD

AUTHOR OF 'TRAVELS IN THE CAUCASUS AND BASHAN' AND EDITOR OF 'THE ALPINE JOURNAL'

61

Over the great windy waters, and over the clear-crested summits
Unto the sun and the sky, and unto the perfecter earth

Clough

THE PUNTA TRUBESCIA AND CIMA DI TSCHIGNOL, FROM MT. MOSETTA

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1875

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TO THE

MOST CONSTANT OF MY COMPANIONS

FRANÇOIS JOSEPH DEVOCASSOUD

NOTE.

The First Chapter is reprinted with corrections and additions from 'Fraser's Magazine.' The Thirteenth and fragments of one or two others have previously appeared in the 'Alpine Journal,' from which three of the illustrations have also been borrowed. The remaining seven have been engraved for this work under the care of Mr. G. Pearson.

The heights throughout the book and in all the maps are given in English feet.

PREFACE.

I owe a double apology for the publication of this volume; in the first place to the public, secondly to my friends.

'Mountaineering' has been by this time fully described by very competent writers. No new book is likely to have any chance of rivalling the popularity of the first series of 'Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers,' or of the dramatic story of the Matterhorn, as told and illustrated by Mr. E. Whymper. There is no longer the least novelty in the small feats of gymnastics annually performed, or supposed to be performed, by members of the Alpine Club. Few readers, I think, outside that body of enthusiasts, are eager to hear anything more of guides and glaciers, arêtes and séracs, cols, couloirs and crevasses. Such subjects recur more often than I could wish in the following pages. But in attempting to give any adequate picture of a mountain region it is impossible to leave out the snow mountains. My object has been to keep them as far as possible in their proper place in the landscape. I could not, like some tourists,

ignore everything above the snow-level, but I have not, I trust, written as if the world began only at that point and everything beneath it was also beneath notice.

The sketches here brought together are a patchwork from the journals of seven summers. Their chief claim to interest lies in the fact that they deal with portions of the Alpine chain, about which English readers have hitherto found no information in their own language except in guide-books. General experience proves that the British mind—the remark does not, I believe, hold equally good of the German—will not readily take in a new lesson through this medium. Few of our fellow-countrymen turn their steps towards an unknown region unless directed thither either by the report of friends or by some book less technical and abstruse than a Dictionary of Peaks and Passes. Such a book, I venture to hope, the present volume may be found.

The gap which it is intended to fill has long remained one of the broadest in our English Alpine literature.

We have already two works of permanent value dealing with the southern side of the Alps. But Val Formazza was the eastern limit of the late Mr. King's 'Italian Valleys of the Pennine Alps.' The authors of 'The Dolomites' did not go west of the Adige. The exquisite valleys round the head of Lago Maggiore, so easily accessible from the lake or the St. Gothard road, have been completely passed over. The mountains of Val Masino and Val Livigno, distant respectively only a day's journey west and east of the crowded

Upper Engadine, are still left to their bears and Bergamasque shepherds. The Punta Trubinesca, a noble peak, which, seen from Monte Generoso, heads the array of the Rhætian Alps, has been but once ascended, although it is accessible to anybody who can cross the Diavolezza Pass or climb the Titlis. In the highlands of Lombardy and the Trentino—speaking roughly, the country between Lago di Como and Trent—Italy and Switzerland seem to join hands. There, under an Italian sky and girt round by southern flowers and foliage, the fantastic rock-ridges and mighty towers of the Brenta stand opposite the broad snow-plains of the Adamello. Yet the beauties of this region, one of the most fascinating in the Alps, have, but for a stray mountaineer or a scanty notice in the 'Alpine Journal,' remained unsought and unsung.

The few friends and companions who have hitherto shared with me its enjoyment may here ask, 'And why could not you let them remain so?' I will at any rate offer none but honest excuses. I can make no pretence to having been overcome by any benevolent feeling towards the public at large. Had there seemed the smallest reasonable hope of our haunts remaining undisturbed I should have been disposed still to keep the secret I have already guarded for some years. But unfortunately, at least from our point of view, a spirit of enterprise has sprung up amongst the people of the country; roads are being made, new inns opened, old ones furbished up, and as a result English visitors are becoming less and less rare. In the ordinary course of

events it was hardly possible for another year to pass by without some monthly tourist, with a facility in bookmaking, penetrating the Lombard Alps.

If it was inevitable that these mountains should be brought before the world, it seemed better that they should be introduced by one who had with them a friendship of some years' standing rather than by a new acquaintance. Moreover there was a very obvious advantage in making the revelation myself. I have outgrown the rash enthusiasm which leads discoverers to overrate all the merits and understate half the disadvantages of their last new discovery. I have, so far as I know my own mind, no desire to deceive anybody. I am prepared, as new-comers seldom are, to attach at least their due importance to all difficulties of climate or of transport, from want of accommodation or from want of guides. In short, I mean to frame a friendly invitation to those who know how to travel which yet shall not allure the crowd who tour. As an eclectic wanderer I can afford to state, with perfect frankness, my conviction that, if you can put up with the crowd, there is no place where great snow-peaks are so well seen as in the Bernese Oberland—that there is no climbing which equals that to be had within twenty miles of Zermatt—that the ice scenery on Mont Blanc is unsurpassable in Europe, and the climate of the Upper Engadine the most bracing south of the Arctic circle. And I can heartily agree in the conclusion that everyone who, wishing for nothing more, crosses the frontier of Italy, commits an act of folly. I write only

for those who do wish for something more—who, like myself, feel at times in a mood for less austere society. The Swiss peaks sit erect in a solemn white-robed row of Monks and Virgins, most noble and inspiring to contemplate. The Italian Alps I may venture to compare to a gay and gracious company, robed in blue, red, and purple pomp, and setting off the costume by that most becoming artifice, well-powdered heads.

I have only to add a few words on matters of detail. The first eleven chapters deal with ground new[1] to English readers. The twelfth contains information not given elsewhere, and likely to be useful now that a large inn is opened at San Martino di Castrozza, in the most beautiful situation of any stopping-place in Italian Tyrol.[2] The Pelmo, as in many respects a unique mountain, has a certain novelty. The last chapter is an expostulation for which the present moment seems particularly opportune.

In order to meet a difficulty which most authors must have felt, I have ventured in one respect on an innovation on the ordinary form of books of Swiss travel. The details as to inns, ascents or paths, necessary on the spot, are tiresome when a book is read at home; on the other hand, when travelling it is often difficult at a moment's notice to extract from

[1] The Livigno district has been touched on in two works, *A Summer Tour in the Grisons*, by Mrs. H. Freshfield, and *Here and There in the Alps*, by the Hon. E. Plunket, but the route here described was not previously known. There is a pleasant description of Val di Sole, in *On Foot through Tyrol*, by Walter White. Chapman and Hall, 1856.

[2] See Appendix I 'on Tyrol v. Tirol.'

the body of the work the exact fact wanted. Such new remarks therefore as I had to offer on these matters, I have embodied in an appendix where, without being obtrusive, they will be readily accessible.

The list of illustrations and maps will explain itself, and show that by Messrs. Longman's liberality the volume is in these respects unusually well provided.

My best thanks are due to my friends Mr. J. Gilbert and Mr. F. F. Tuckett for the use of the accurate sketches which have furnished most of the illustrations.

Two of the district maps and part of the third are extracts from the as yet unpublished south-eastern sheet of the Alpine Club map of the Central Alps. The hill-engraving being still incomplete, the mountains have been put in from a stone.

The Brenta group is now laid down for the first time with any approach to accuracy, and some pains have been taken to render this addition as far as possible worthy of the map of which it forms a natural extension. For assistance in my endeavours to ascertain the correct nomenclature I have to thank the Trentine Alpine Society, who appointed a special committee to make enquiries on the spot,[1] and Mr. M. Holzmann. I regret to be obliged to add that owing to the churlishness of the Viennese authorities I have been unable to profit in any way by the results of the great Survey of the Trentino and South Tyrol lately executed by the Austrian engineers.

[1] See Appendix E for further details on this subject.

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THE LOCARNO DISTRICT.

Errata

Page 52, line 4 from top, *for* Val d'Ossola *read* Val d'Orcla

„ 157. „ 8 „ bottom, *for* Leone d'Oro *read* Due Mori

„ 162. „ 3 „ „ *for* a niesdag *read* an leelag

CHAPTER I.

VAL MAGGIA.

Huge mountains of immeasurable height
Encompass'd all the level valley round
With mighty slabs of rock that sloped upright,
An insurmountable enclosure bound;—
That vale was so sequester'd and secluded,
All search for ages past it had eluded. HOOKHAM FRERE.

VAL MAGGIA—BIGNASCO—VAL LAVIZZARA—PIZ RAMONDE—VAL RAVONA—PIZ CAMPO TENCCA—VAL DI PRATO.

THE typical Alpine Clubman has been somewhere described by Mr. Anthony Trollope as cherishing in his bosom, through the ten months of each year in which the business of life debars him from his favourite pursuit, an ever-gnawing desire for the beloved mountains.

For myself, whenever, as I often do, I vent

——— an inward groan
To sit upon an Alp as on a throne

it is accompanied, as in Keats' sonnet, by "a languishment for skies Italian." The bright recollections which at once console and harass me during the fogs and snows of our Cimmerian winters owe their existence as much to Italian valleys as to snowy peaks. After a week of hard mountaineering at Zermatt or in the

Oberland, the keen colourless air of the Riffel or Bell Alp begins to pall upon my senses; the pine-woods and chalets to remind me, against my will, of a German box of toys. I sigh for the opal-coloured waves of atmosphere which are beating up against the southern slopes of the mountains, for the soft and varied foliage, the frescoed walls and far-gleaming campaniles of Italy. In such a mood, after a morning spent upon the snows of Monte Rosa or the Adamello, I plunge with the keenest delight amongst the vines of Val Sesia or Val Camonica.

For this morbid tendency, as it is considered by some vigorous friends, I do not propose to offer either defence or apology. Still less do I wish to become a public benefactor by leading on a mob to take possession of my pleasure grounds. But there is ample room for a few congenial spirits, and towards these I would not be selfish.

In truth the unequivocal warmth of the valleys of the southern Alps in August, the English travelling season, will serve to check the incursions of cockneydom; for the modern British tourist professes himself incapable of enjoying life, much less exercise, under even a moderate degree of heat. Everybody knows how the three warm days which make up an English summer are received with more groans than gratitude, and the thunderstorm which invariably ends them is saluted by a chorus of thanksgiving adequate for a delivery from some Egyptian plague. The sun so dreaded at home we naturally shun abroad. Italy and the Levant are already deserted at the season when they become most enjoyable. An Italian valley suggests to the too solid Englishman not the glorious glow of summer and a profusion of 'purple

grapes, green figs, and mulberries,' but fever, cholera, and sundry kinds of dissolution.

Lago Maggiore is a name well known to thousands, but I doubt whether, even in the Alpine Club, ten could be found ready to point out off-hand the whereabouts of Val Maggia. Yet the valley offers a type of beauty as rare and worth knowing as the lake into which its waters flow.[1]

Behind Locarno, at the head of Lago Maggiore, is the outlet of a network of valleys, forming the veins of the mountain mass, Italian by nature, though Swiss by circumstance, which divides the Gries and the St. Gothard. The longest and deepest of these valleys is that of the Maggia. Yet, despite its length, it leads to no pass over the main Alpine chain. The gaps at its head open only on the high pasturages of Val Bedretto. It has been thus cut off by nature from any share in the traffic which has flowed for centuries on one or the other side of it.

I must now ask the reader to imagine himself seated beside me on the box of the country omnibus which plies daily through this valley. Some three miles from Locarno in the picturesque defile of Ponte Brolla our eyes, accustomed to the murky grey of most glacier streams, are first greeted by the marvellous waters of the Maggia, shining with intensity of blue out of deep caves and hollows in the heart of the smooth white granite. But for many miles to come the scenery of Val Maggia does not rise above the ordinary boldness of a granite district, here graced by a slender cascade, there marred by a stony waste.

[1] I have not succeeded in discovering any connection between the word Maggia and Maggiore.

About sixteen miles, or three hours, from Locarno the road crosses for the first time to the right bank of the stream, and passes through Cevio, the political centre of the neighbouring valleys, standing on the confines of the three districts of Val Maggia, Val Lavizzara and Val Rovana. We drive across an open space, like an English village green, surrounded by houses more pretentious than are commonly seen in the mountains.

It was on this spot that De Saussure, while taking an observation to ascertain the height of the place above the sea, was greeted and invited to enter by the baillie or chief magistrate of the valley. I cannot resist quoting the amusing account of the interview which followed.

'It being some time,' writes De Saussure, 'since I had had any news from the civilized world, I accepted the invitation, hoping to learn some. What was my surprise when the baillie told me that though it was long since he had had any letter from the other side of the Alps, he should be happy to give an answer to any inquiry I might wish to make. At the same time he showed me an old black seal, and this was the oracle which answered all his questions. He held in his hand a string, to the end of which this seal was attached, and he dangled the seal thus fastened in the centre of a drinking-glass. Little by little the trembling of the hand communicated to the thread and seal a motion which made the latter strike against the sides of the glass. The number of these blows indicated the answer to the question which the person who held the string had in his mind. He assured me with the seriousness of profound conviction that he knew by this means not only everything that was going on at home, but also

the elections for the Council of Bale and the number of votes each candidate had obtained. He questioned me on the object of my travels, and after having learnt it, showed me on his almanac the age which common chronology gives the world, and asked me what I thought about it. I told him that my observations of mountains had led me to look on the world as somewhat older. "Ah," he answered with an air of triumph, "my seal had already told me so, because the other day I had the patience to count the blows while reflecting on the world's age, and I found it was four years older than it is set down in this almanac."'

Near Cevio the landscape takes a more romantic character. The valley-walls close in and bend, and huge knobs of ruddy-grey rock thrust themselves forward. The river, confined to a narrow bed, alternately lies still in pools, whose depth of blue no comparison can express, or rushes off over the white boulders in a clear sparkling dance. Chestnut-trees hang from the crags overhead; higher on the hills every ledge is a stripe of verdure fringed with the delicate shapes of the birch and larch. In the far distance a snow-peak in the range above Val Leventina gleams behind the folds of the nearer mountains.

But up to the last moment nothing foreshadows the wonderful surprise in store. As we draw near the first scattered houses of Bignasco, the mountains suddenly break open, and reveal a vision of the most exquisite and harmonious beauty, one of those master-pieces of nature which defy the efforts of the subtlest word-painters, and are perhaps best left alone by a dull topographer. Yet I cannot refrain, useless as the effort may be, from at least cataloguing some of the details which come to-

gether in this noble landscape. The waters at our feet are transparent depths of a colour, half sapphire and half emerald, indescribable, and, the moment the eye is taken away, inconceivable, so that every glance becomes a fresh surprise. In the foreground on either bank of the stream are frescoed walls and mossy house-roofs; beyond is a summerhouse supported by pillars, and a heavily laden peach-orchard lit with a blaze of sunflowers. At the gate of Val Bavona a white village glistens from amidst its vineyards. Sheer above it two bold granite walls rise out of the verdure, and form the entrance to a long avenue of great mountain shapes. Behind these foremost masses the hills fall valleywards in noble and perfectly harmonious lines. Each upper cliff flows down into a slope of chestnut-ruffled boulders in a curve, the classical beauty of which is repeated by the vine-tendrils at its feet. In the distance the snows of the Basodine seen through the sunny haze gleam, like a golden halo, on the far-off head of the mountain.

Is human interest wanted to give completeness and a motive to the picture? As daylight faded I have watched the swinging torches and low chaunt of those who carried the Host to some passing soul. In the morning-glow I have seen a white-robed procession pour slowly with banners and noise of bells from the yet dark village, then suddenly issuing into the sunshine, surge, a living wave of brightness, over the high-arched bridges.

Bignasco lives in my memory as one of the loveliest spots in the Italian Alps. Planted at the meeting-place of three valleys, the view up Val Bavona is only the fairest of the fair scenes which surround it. In every

direction paths strike off through the woods. Across the river rises a bold bluff of rock; behind it the hill-side curves in, and forms an ample bay filled with chestnut forest; at intervals a sunny spot has been cleared and planted as a vineyard, the unstubbed ground is covered by a carpet of Alpine rhododendron, here tempted down to its lowest limit in the chain.[1] Little tracks, wandering in alternate 'forthrights and meanders' from one haybarn to another, lead at last to a white chapel placed on a conspicuous brow. By its side stands an older and humbler edifice. The gates of both are bolted, but the bolt is held fast only by a withered nosegay, and it is easy to make an entrance into the smaller chapel and examine its frescoes. They have been atrociously daubed over; but the pattern of the child's dress in the central picture, and a certain strength in the figures and faces on the side walls, still bear witness to a time when the great wave of Italian art spread even into Val Maggia. A date in the first twenty years of the sixteenth century may be read above the altar.

We are here on the verge of the chestnuts; a few hundred feet above us the woods change into beech and ash groves; higher still birch and larch feather the mountain spurs. The valleys meet at our feet. On the left, sloping lawns fall away abruptly into a deep torrent-worn ravine; far beneath are the white houses of Cevio. Val Bavona with its mountain curves and crowning snows lies immediately opposite.

Why, we ask, as we sit on the chapel steps, does this combination of rocks and trees touch our senses with so rare and subtle a pleasure? On the lakes we

[1] Bignasco is only 1,400 feet above the sea.

have left landscapes more 'softly sublime, profusely fair.' But those belonged to the class of hill-scenery; even the waving crests were to their tops clothed in green and the whole landscape pleased and contented us by its aspect of unbroken domestic repose and richness. Here the bold dark outlines of the granite precipices hanging over the luxuriant yet untamed loveliness of the valley appeal to our emotions with the strong power of contrast. The majesty of the central ranges wedded to the beauty of Italy excites in us that enthusiasm beyond tranquil admiration which is our tribute to the highest expression of the Romantic whether in Art or Nature. We can contemplate calmly a rich lake-scene or an Umbrian Madonna; we feel disposed to cry out with delight before a figure of Michael Angelo or this view in Val Maggia.

For in this valley the strength of granite is clothed in the grace of southern foliage, in a rich mantle of chestnuts and beeches, fringed with maize and vines, and embroidered about the skirts with delicate traceries of ferns and cyclamen. Nature seems here to have hit the mark she so often misses—to speak boldly but truly—in her higher efforts: she has avoided alike the trough-like uniformity which renders hideous much of the upper Engadine and diminishes even the splendours of Chamonix, the naked sternness of Mattmark or the Grimsel, the rough scales of muddy moraine and torrent-spread ruin which deface Monte Rosa herself, where she sinks towards Macugnaga and Italy.

It is easy to return more directly down the face of the rocks. In these valleys the industry of centuries, by building up stone staircases from shelf to shelf, has made paths in the least likely spots. Even the

narrowest ledge between two cliffs is turned to profit. Across the bridge behind the inn rises an abrupt crag, up the face of which a dwarf wall runs at a very high angle. This wall, at first sight purposeless, proved to be in fact a stone ladder, the flakes of gneiss which projected along its top serving as steps for the active peasantry. The ascent to some of the alps lies up stone staircases, three hours—to measure distance in the local manner—in length. To these the wiry little cows of Canton Ticino speedily accustom themselves. Indeed, so expert do they become in getting up stairs that the broad flights of steps leading to the church doors have to be barricaded by posts placed at narrow intervals to prevent the parting herd from yielding to a sudden impulse to join in a body in morning mass, or a stray cow from wandering in unawares to browse on the tinsel vegetation of the high altar.

The greater part of the population of Bignasco cluster closely under the hillside, where a long dull village street squeezed in between two rows of stone walls opens out here and there into a tiny square or 'piazzetta,' with a stone bench and a stone fountain overshadowed by a stone-propped vine. These houses resemble in nothing those of a Swiss hamlet. The abandonment of the use of wood in favour of an equally handy and more solid material, joined to something in the external construction of the houses, carried my thoughts, on our last visit, far away to the stone towns of central Syria. Here, as there, I noted that the principal entrance to each tenement was by a gateway eight to ten feet high, and proportionately broad. Remembering how in my youth I had been taken to task by a worthy

missionary for not recognising in such doors the work of giants, I enquired eagerly for traditions of some local Og, perhaps a link between the giant of the Mettenberg and the present Swiss. But such was the ignorance of the country folk that I could obtain no further answer than that the gateways were a convenient size for a laden mule.

The well-to-do people of Val Maggia seem to be sensible of the charms of the spot where the waters of Val Bavona and the main valley meet.

On the promontory between the two rivers, each crossed just above the junction by a bold arch, stands a suburb of what would be described by an auctioneer as 'detached villas,' houses gay with painted shutters and arched loggias, where grapes cluster and oleanders flush. One of these, commanding from its upper windows the perfect view up Val Bavona, is the 'Posta,' the home of Signor Patocchi, who entertains the rare strangers who visit the village. Our host is a man of high standing and substance in his own country. For three generations the office of President of the United Districts of Val Maggia has remained in his family. He has represented Ticino on public occasions and is a member of the Cantonal Council and of the Swiss Alpine Club. The energy of the race is represented also by a vivacious active sister who dwells with family pride on her brother's successes in life, and most of all on a bridge for the new St. Gothard railway, for which he had accepted the contract; a 'cosa stupenda,' a 'vera opera Romana.'

The example of their foregoers has assuredly not been lost on the modern Italians. Not only in great works such as the Mont Cenis tunnel or the coast railway

from Nice to Spezzia, but also in the country roads of remote valleys the traveller finds frequent evidences of the survival of the Roman tradition and genius for road-making. The industry and skill displayed in opening and improving means of communication by the most obscure communes—frequently, it is true, when they expend themselves in the laborious construction of pavés, misdirected—contrast very favourably with the sloth in the same matter of many northern 'Boards' apt to pride themselves on their energy.

Sometimes, however, this inherited zeal outruns discretion, witness the following story taken from a local newspaper. Caspoggio is a hamlet perched high on a green hillside in Val Malenco, at the back of the Bernina. The lower communes had in 1874 just completed a new road to which Caspoggio naturally desired to link itself. There were two ways of effecting this, one estimated to cost 40,000 lire (£1,600), the other 15,000 (£600); the cheapest road was, however, twenty-two minutes the longer. The bold patriarchs of Caspoggio were all for saving time as against money. Whereon the 'Corriere Valtellinese' solemnly protested against the intended extravagance, and pointed out its inconsistency with the facts that the annual income of the commune was not more than £80 a year, and that it could only afford its schoolmaster and mistress annual pittances of £6 apiece. 'My good sirs of Caspoggio,' said this sensible adviser, 'is it worth while to create a communal debt in order to bring your butter and cheese a few minutes earlier to market?' How Caspoggio decided I have yet to learn.

To return to Val Maggia and its President. Signor Patocchi is a man of position among his neighbours,

and his house shows it. But he is also a Southerner, and his floors show it. Having confessed this, however, the worst is said, and for the rest English people accustomed to travel will find little to complain of. The beds are clean, fish and fowl the neighbourhood supplies, and a few hours' notice will collect ample provisions for the carnivorous climber.

But it is time for us to leave Bignasco and follow the road up the main valley henceforth known as Val Lavizzara.

For four or five miles we mount through a picturesque ravine, where the mountains rise in rugged walls tier above tier overhead. Yet every cranny is filled with glossy foliage, and the intervening ledges are no monstrous deformities, only fit to be 'left to slope,' but each a meadow closely mown, and dotted with stone haybarns. If some gash is noticed in the cliffs it is only as a brighter streak of colour; the ruin wrought below has long been buried out of sight, cottages grow against the fallen rocks, and vines fling themselves over their roughnesses. The river, no murky grey monster—like those fitly transformed into dragons by the legends of the northern Alps—runs through a narrow cleft, in the depths of which we catch alternate glimpses of deep blue pools or creamlike falls.

A little farther the defile opens, the stream flows more peaceably, and we shall see fishermen armed with huge jointless rods strolling along its banks. Though still early morning, some are already returning, amongst them a curé with a well-filled basket for his Friday dinner.

Several clusters of houses hang on the hillside, but the first village is Broglio, shaded by groves of gigantic

walnuts; a mile beyond the valley bends, the shoulders of the hills sink sufficiently to allow their rugged heads to come into view, and a glen opens on the right backed by the jagged snow-streaked range of the Campo Tencca. The first sunbeams which have reached us stream through the gap, and bathe the forest in a golden flood of light. A great pulpit-shaped boulder rises beside the road, and is seized on as a post by the telegraph wire. Soon after we cross the stream and enter two adjoining villages. Beyond them is a small cemetery, decorated with paintings in somewhat better taste than those usually found in the mountains. There is further evidence of culture in the couplet from Dante, which under one of the frescoes takes the place of the usual Latin text.

Amidst a rocky waste, where the torrent from Val Peccia joins the larger stream, stands the dirty hamlet of Peccia. The glen to which it gives a name seems here the true head of the valley, but the entrance to the longest branch is by a steep ascent up the right-hand hillside. Above the first level, a grassy dell occupied by some saw-mills, the river has cut its way through a rock-barrier. Here on my first visit the air rebounded with the hammering and sawing of a large company of labourers, some clinging on the rocks and boring, others wheeling away the rubbish, whilst another party were building up the piers of a lofty bridge. The excellent and boldly engineered road then in construction is now completed, and leads as far as Fusio.

We are now at the limit of the romantic Italian valley, and are leaving behind us not only the vine and the chestnut, but also the granite. The mountains as

we approach them seem to sink before us. The precipices of the lower valley give place to smooth lawns shadowed by spreading beeches. The gentle hillsides which surround the headwaters of the Maggia rise up into low rounded crests, and the scenery is only redeemed from monotony by the rich variety of the foliage and verdure.

The highest village, Fusio, is a cluster of houses crowded round a church, and clinging to a steep slope, at the foot of which flows the blue torrent in a deep bridge-spanned cleft. The inn ten years ago was of the most primitive kind. It was kept by a worthy couple whose shrewd puckered faces recalled some portrait of an early German master. But they were as lively as they were old, and no emergency, not even the arrival of three hungry Englishmen, found them without resources. On the occasion in question they boldly proceeded to sacrilege on our behalf. The village knew that the curé was going to have a fowl for dinner; the good dame hurried off to the parsonage, and like David robbed the tables of the priest.

The old inn and its owners are no longer to be found. A new hotel has lately been built, and is said to be frequented by Italians seeking refuge from the summer heat of the Lombard plain.

Thus far we have simply followed the main valley. Of its numerous tributary glens, Val Bavona and Val di Prato are the most likely to be visited by mountaineers, for they lead to the two highest summits of the neighbouring ranges, the Basodine and Piz Campo Teneca. But their beauties ought to attract others besides those who may wish to use them as means to a higher end—in a literal and Alpine Club sense.

The finest entrance to Val Maggia is through Val Bavona. The traveller descending from the cold heights and bleak pasturages of the Gries finds a warm welcome from the storm in the little inn opened some years ago on the very edge of the cliff over which the Tosa rushes in the most imposing cataract of the central Alps.[1] An afternoon is well spent in resting on the rocks beside the tearing, foaming flood, and watching the endless variety of the forms taken by the broken waves in their wild downward rush. Waterfalls are too seldom studied at leisure. Such a view is far more impressive than the hurried glance ordinarily taken from some point whence the cascade is seen in face, and all detail is sacrificed to a general effect, which often fails to be either imposing or picturesque.

The host of the inn will with pleasure undertake to place you next morning in from three to four hours on the top of the Basodino. The ascent is simple, and not at all tedious; a steep path up a moist flower-sprinkled cliff, rolling alps commanding views of the red mountains of the Gries, then steep banks of frozen snow, and a short exciting scramble up the highest rocks.

The mountain is a natural belvidere for the Bernese Oberland and Monte Rosa, and rising a good head above its fellows, must give a glorious view towards Italy. But to me the mountains of Val Maggia are unfriendly. Here as on Piz Campo Teneca I saw only a stoneman and a world of seething mists.

The night before our ascent had been black and

[1] The falls of Krimml in Tyrol are probably on the whole the Alpine cataract in which height of fall, force of water, and picturesque surroundings are most thoroughly united. There are many falls in the Adamello group which a painter would prefer to the cascade of the Tosa.

wild. The wind had roared against the waterfall, and the thunder had rocked the house as though it had a mind to shake it bodily over the cliff. But the grey sad suprise was not without hope; the scarves of mist which still clung about the mountains seemed remnants of an outworn grief; the upper sky, pale and tremulous, rather spoke of a storm past than threatened further ills to come. But the crisis had been more violent than we dreamt at the time, and twenty-four hours of reperation were needed before the face of heaven could again shine in its full summer fairness.

The loss of the view was not our only disappointment. It had been determined to find a new and more direct way down to San Carlo through Val Antabbia. But in a blind fog it is best to avoid precipices, and we knew there were plenty in that direction, so we quietly returned to the gap between our peak and the Kastelhorn, and put on the rope preparatory to descending the Cavergno Glacier.

The slopes of snow, cut here and there by deep rifts, offered easy passage until hardening into blue ice they curled over steeply. Some rocks stuck out on our left, and at their base, at a depth of several hundred feet, abysses innumerable gaped through the mists. This was an unexpected difficulty, and we should have been perplexed what to do had not the wind slightly shifted the cloud-curtain, and shown enough to enable us to understand our exact position.

The glacier is divided into two terraces by a wall of rock, which towards the base of the Kastelhorn is covered over by an icefall, passable no doubt with ease near that peak. We had descended too directly, and were to the right, or south, of the fall. We must

either remount and go round, or else get down the rocks. With a little trouble we found a passage, and François, boldly taking advantage of a narrow bridge between two ice-pits, led us safely on to the lower branch of the glacier.

Its surface was broken only by contemptible crevices, and we ran down without interruption to the huge terminal moraine. Sitting amongst its blocks, we looked back at the great shining slope, on which the sun was already shining. High up under the Basodine long shadows fell from an isolated group of snow-towers or 'séracs,' amongst the most prodigious I had seen in the Alps; a glacier Karnac of ponderous columns and huge propylons. The smoothness of the surrounding ice, like the flatness of the Egyptian plain, added to the effect of this mountain temple.

We wished we had missed our way a little more and passed through its midst. Had we done so we might have followed out the upper or southern branch of the glacier, and found our way into the glen below the meeting of waterfalls afterwards mentioned. Close to the ice, in a sheltered basin, spread with a carpet of verdure, and watered by a smooth-flowing stream, we found the highest châlets. Great was our surprise when our eager enquiries for milk were answered in broken English. The herdsman had worked as a miner in Cornwall, and had now returned in good circumstances to his native valley.

The narrowness of their granite walls drives the Val Maggians far afield in search of subsistence.[1] A wayside

[1] Between the years 1850–56, one-eighth of the whole population, and one-fourth of the male population, left their homes. Amongst the emigrants were 324 married men, only two of whom took their wives with them!

chapel in Val Bavona has been recently erected, as its inscription narrates, with Australian gold, and the driver of the Locarno omnibus in 1873 had learnt English in the Antipodes. Most of these wanderers come back, some rich, to build large, white, cheerful houses—'palazzi' their friends call them—amongst the familiar chestnut-groves; others, like our friend, less successful, but still not wholly unrewarded, to revert contentedly to the old solitary life on the hills with the cows and goats. There can be no stronger proof of the real fascination of mountains over minds which have grown amongst them than the fidelity of these peasants, who hurry back from all the excitements of the Antipodes to the monotony of the alp in summer and the hamlet in winter.[1]

Beyond the huts, path and stream make a sudden plunge into a deep hollow, the meeting-place of the waters which, springing from the tarns and snows that lie on the upper shelves, rush over the granite precipices in a succession of noble falls. The shadeless glen is closed at its lower end by a buttress projecting from the eastern mountain. On climbing the spur we saw deep below us a trough-like valley. Steep mountains encircled the basin, and its floor was strewn with huge masses torn from their rugged sides. High overhead rose the southern bulwarks of the Basodine, gigantic cliffs, on whose topmost verge sparkled a glittering ice-cornice. At our feet San Carlo, the highest village in Val Bavona, peeped out from amidst

[1] The herdsmen of these châlets have a way to the Val Formazza without crossing the Basodine. The 'Bocchetta di Val Maggia,' a gap in the rocky ridge at the north-eastern corner of the Cavergno glacier, brings them on to the pastures near the San Giacomo Pass, whence either Airolo or the Tosa Falls can be gained without further ascent.

rich foliage. Many women were scattered over the meadows, cutting and gathering in their hay; and, as we rested, a boy came up from them, and told us that to reach the valley we must return and cross the stream. A rough path on the right bank led us through beautiful copses, where the beech and birch mingled their branches with the pines, and tall ferns and bright-berried bushes wove a luxuriant undergrowth. Chestnuts and walnuts greeted us for the first time as we approached the high-arched bridge leading to San Carlo.

The path, now a good cart-track carried on a causeway between purple boulders and gnarled old chestnuts, passed by the way a brightly coloured chapel and two villages. Near the second, a cluster of poor huts hemmed in by enormous blocks of granite, a pretty jet of water shoots out of the western cliff, the valley bends, and the sunlit mountains behind Bignasco close the distance.

A short plain, ruined by a torrent which has recently carried away half a hamlet, is now passed. To such disasters Val Bavona is always exposed, and a law formerly forbad any one to live in it through the winter.

Henceforth, keeping beside the clear blue waters, we descended with them, through a tangle of white stream-smoothed boulders, and under the shadow of the prodigious cliffs from which they have fallen. One of the blocks bears this simple record: 'Qui fu bella Campagna,' and the date 1594. Yet despite the ruin and destruction of which the defile, within an even historically modern epoch, has been the scene, its beauty is in no way of a stern or savage nature. If the mountain shapes are as majestical as those of Giotto's Duomo,

their walls are also decorated with the most lavish hand; and even where the granite is bare time and weather have tinted it with the mellow hues of an old Florentine façade.

No more typical passage from the Alps to Italy can possibly be found than that we had chosen. A few hours ago we had been in the frigid zone among the eternal snows, and above the level of all but the hardiest plants. Now the green pastures and the pines were already past, the chestnut had become our companion, and the first vine threw its long branches over the rude woodwork of a sheltered hut. Soon three or four were found in company under the sunny side of a heat-reflecting rock, until as we drew near Cavergno the whole slope became a vineyard, and the path an overarched alley between a double row of tall granite pillars, from which the ripe clusters hung down into our faces in too tempting luxuriance.

A straight line drawn from Faido, on the St. Gothard road, to Bignasco nearly passes through Piz Campo Tencca, the three-domed snow-crest which dominates the eastern range, and, like its loftier rival, the Basodine, peers down on that charming halting-place. The pass between the two highest of these summits was, therefore, clearly the proper path for two mountaineers coming from the east to Val Maggia.

To the driving public Faido is known for an excellent inn and a waterfall, the latter the outflow of the glacier we proposed to cross. A much-used track climbs in a long zigzag to the cultivated tableland which lies above the steep slope overshadowing the village. Beyond the large upland hamlet of Dalpe, our path pursued the stream into the hills, mounting steeply by its side to an

upper plain, whence several tracks, some for goats and some for cows, led over broken ground to the Crozlina Alp, a broad pasturage at the base of a wall of rocks, over which the streams falling from the upper glaciers shiver themselves into spray. A few yards south of a boldly projecting crag, and by the side of one of the cascades, we found it easy to scramble up the broken rock-faces until the level of the ice was reached; then it seemed best to bear to the right, and follow a long ridge connecting the buttress and the highest peak.

The morning had been uncertain, and now the clouds, which we had hoped were only local and passing, fell upon us with a determination which promised little chance of deliverance.

What is the duty of a traveller and his guides overtaken on the mountains by bad weather is a question which the sad death on the Mer de Glace brought not long ago prominently before the public, and which will be argued as often as some fatal accident calls attention to the subject. It is one which does not admit of any offhand answer. Climbers are of various constitutions, there are mountains and mountains, and divers kinds of bad weather. Still it may be useful to endeavour to lay down such leading principles as will probably meet with general consent.

Where the travellers are new to high mountains, and uncertain of their own powers of endurance, the guide, in every case where going on involves long exposure to storm, should suggest, and his employers agree to, a retreat. The moral courage necessary for this is one of the requisites of a guide's calling; and if by its exercise he may sometimes expose himself to the hasty ridicule of an ignorant tourist, he will not

suffer in his profession or in the estimation of real climbers.

Again, an attempt on one of the more difficult peaks, such as the Schreckhorn or the Weisshorn, ought not to be persevered with in doubtful weather; that is, by perseverance in such a case the risk to life becomes so serious that, whatever the travellers' own value of themselves may be, they have no right to ask guides to share it. For it should always be remembered that it is where difficulties prevent rapid movement that the bitter cold grasps its victim. Except, perhaps, in the very worst, and fortunately rare, *tourmentes* circulation can always be maintained by constant motion.

Thirdly, exposure to this worst kind of storm, which comes on with an insupportable icy blast, should be as far as possible shunned even on a mule-pass. The simple monuments which line the track of the Col de Bonhomme and the Gavia Pass, near Santa Catarina, bear witness to the dangers of such weather, even on a comparatively frequented route.

There remain, however, a large class of cases where more or less seasoned climbers are overtaken by clouds, rain, or snow, in each of which the decision must depend on the circumstances, and for which no general rule can be laid down. A wet day in the valley is often far from intolerable above the snow-level, where the gently falling flakes sink slowly through an air of moderate temperature. In such weather many high passes may be safely accomplished by men of sufficient experience, who understand how to apply their local knowledge, or to use a good map and compass.

Of course, it will be asked, *Cui bono?*—why wander amidst the mists when you might be comfortable below

them? The answer is, that when the day changes the traveller is often far on his way. It is a case, perhaps, of going back four hours or going on five: there is, besides the natural disinclination to return and to have had one's walk for nothing, the hope, often justified, that the change for the worse may be only temporary. These are motives which must strongly influence everyone in such a position.

Besides, the inside of a cloud is not quite so dismal a place as might be thought, and the snow-region, even when the distant view is hidden, offers attractions for those who have learnt to appreciate it. The fretted ice-chasms, the toppling towers and fragile arches of the upper glacier, the keen white pyramid seen suddenly through a wreath of mist, or the snow-wave caught in the act of breaking over the highest crest, have a loveliness of their own as delicate as, and from its strangeness to inhabitants of a temperate zone sometimes even more fascinating than, the charm of streams and forests. It is not, it is true, visible to all eyes. A Reverend Principal lately instructed his audience that 'a more hideous spectacle than a yawning crevasse, with its cold, blue, glassy sides, can scarcely be conceived.' But Mons. Loppé and the Alpine Club know better than this. Most of us can probably remember, in the Regent's Park Colosseum, a sham Switzerland: what that in a sorry enough way attempted to be to the reality, the reality is to the Polar regions—a specimen near home of Arctic scenery. Much of this beauty can be seen even in a partial fog. But there is also the chance of that most glorious of transfigurations of earth and sky, when towards evening some breath of air sweeps away the local storm, and through the melt-

ing cloud-wreaths we see the wide landscape glittering with fresh rain, and the new snows shining opposite the setting sun—a scene the full splendour of which can scarcely be recalled even in the memory of those who have often witnessed it.

In the present instance two hours would, we knew, put us well on the other side of the mountain, where our friends were waiting for us; and, though neither my guide nor I knew anything of the ground, we could trust to General Dufour's map. The Swiss traveller has here an enormous advantage over his brother in Great Britain. If anyone is rash enough, in Wales for instance, to put his faith in the English Ordnance Survey, and to seek a passage where light shading seems to indicate an absence of precipices, he will soon find himself brought to a standstill. The present state of our national maps is far from creditable to our Government and our engineers.

For the moment all we had to do was to stick to the ridge, which must and did lead us straight to the stone-man, in such weather the only indication of the summit. A short halt for the chance of a break in the clouds and to settle clearly our route on the map, and we started on the unknown descent. The first point was to strike the gap south of the peak. A few minutes sufficed for this, then we had only to descend with a constant bearing to the left. The ground was steep and rough, and there were cliffs in every direction, but we managed to avoid them. In half an hour we had reached the lower skirts of the cloud, and passed out of gentle snow into pitiless rain.

Cattle tracks now led us past the highest huts to a cabin from the chimney of which smoke issued. The

solitary herdsmann welcomed us with a courtesy and coffee worthy of an Eastern sheikh. The pouring rain, perhaps, flavoured the beverage, but François Devonnassoud and I both fancied that, west of Constantinople, we had never tasted so aromatic a draught.

The head of the valley seemed to be a basin surrounded on all sides by rugged cliffs; in the present weather it was nothing but a caldron of mist. How should we escape from it? The hill-shoulders pressed us in on all sides; yet the shepherd promised a *strada buona*. In a quarter of an hour we were at the meeting-place of the mountain-torrents, where from their union sprang a stream, the bluest of all the blue waters of Val Maggia, full of a life now bright and dashing, now calm and deep, such as might fitly be personified in a Naiad. This was the fairy who would unbar the gates of our prison. We followed the guidance of the waters into the jaws of the mountain, where they had seized on some flaw or fissure to work for themselves a passage. But the stream had thought only for itself. No room was provided for a path, and the ingenuity of a road-making population had evidently been taxed to the utmost to render the ravine passable for cows as well as water. A causeway was built up on every natural shelf, and, where the level could no longer be kept, the hanging terraces were connected by regularly-built stone staircases. A rough balustrade formed a protection on the outside, and prevented a hasty plunge into the gulf, where the brilliant waters wrestled with the stiff crags which every now and then thrust out a knee to stop their flow, and gave them a tumble from which they collected themselves at leisure in a deep still pool before dancing off again to fresh

struggles and fresh victories. From the shelves above the bright-berried mountain ash and delicate birch stretched out their arms to the stream, which, as if impatient for the vines, hurried past them and at last broke away with a bold leap, flying down over the rock-faces to the lower valley in a shower of foam and water-rockets.

Near the junction of a glen through which the track of the Passo di Redorta climbs over to Val Verzasca, a steep descent beside the fall leads to the hamlet of San Carlo. The path here crosses a bridge and keeps henceforth along a broken, richly wooded hill-side until, having swerved to the right, it joins at Prato the main valley.

And so down the moist high-road under the dripping walnuts of Broglio, and again, after ten years, back to Bignasco, beautiful even under the grey cloud-pall with its hill-shapes only suggested between the mists. Most beautiful when with the sunset a northern breeze gathered up the vapour-wreaths and a full moon shone down into Val Bavona marking with clearest lights and shadows all its buttresses, and drawing a responsive gleam from the pure snows at its head. A change too sudden to last. For while sitting on the bridge we watched the moonbeams strike over the southward hill, and fall full on the eddying water at our feet and the flowery balconies on either hand, a white drapery stretched slowly round the Cevio corner, and, as in the immortal Chorus of Aristophanes, a gleaming company of clouds sailed up on their way from the deep hollows of the lake to the wood-crowned heights of the mountain. The leader advanced but slowly with misty folds clinging to each crag; but it had scarcely passed when the

whole body was upon us, and the bright upper heaven was obscured by their fleecy forms.

After midnight we were awakened by the rush of mountain rain and the crash of thunder, while in the white blaze we saw the Maggia blue no longer, but turbid with the grey granite atoms which it was hurrying down to swell the delta of Locarno. The storm spirits were in earnest, and in the morning every cliff had its cascade, bridges had been swept away, and great heaps of mud and stones, washed out of the overhanging crags, blocked even the high-road which offers the only escape from the mountain world.

CHAPTER II.

VAL VERZASCA AND VAL CANOBBINA.

On our other side is the straight-up rock,
And a path is kept 'twixt the gorge and it
By boulderstones, where lichens mock
The marks on a moth, and small ferns fit
Their teeth to the polished block. R. Browning.

PASSO DI REDORTA—VAL VERZASCA—A BROKEN ROAD—LOCARNO—VAL CANOBBINA—VAL VIGEZZO.

Val Maggia is not the only unknown valley which opens on the famous lake. Close beside it, and hemmed in between its mountains and those on the west of Val Leventina, lies a still narrower and more obscure recess, Val Verzasca. In olden days the natives of this glen bore a bad name. In 1490 a writer speaks of them as 'homines sylvestres sparsim ferarum ritu degentes;'[1] and the reputation for wildness so early acquired still sticks to them. Knives are said to be more frequently drawn among them, and with worse consequences, than in any other district of Ticino. But there is no record of a stranger ever having suffered from this tendency to blood-letting, and the ill-repute of the

[1] Dominico Maronco, in his *Verbani lacus locorumque adjacentium chorographica descriptio*, quoted by Studer, *Physische Geographie der Schweiz*. These notices suggest that the Val Verzascans may be a relic of some primitive tribe, but I have no authority for imputing to them ethnological importance.

valley can hardly be held accountable for its neglect by travellers.

So great has been this neglect that the Federal map was to us the chief and almost the only source of information. Thus studied, the peculiarities of Val Verzasca are seen to be the shortness of the side glens which branch off the main stem, and the uniformly great elevation of the surrounding ridges. From Bignasco a tolerably direct path leads over to Brione by Val d'Ossola, and from what we saw I recommend the next visitor to try this way in preference to the longer circuit which we were induced to take by a conscientious desire to see the head of the main Val Verzasca and an unfounded fancy that a carriage road implied vehicles of some sort.

From San Carlo in Val di Prato a track leaving the path to Piz Campo Tencca circles round the westward-facing hillside, and, above a waterfall, traverses beside the torrent a narrow glen. Beyond some châlets we penetrated a sombre funnel, choked with avalanches. It expanded at its upper end into a basin floored with snow and hemmed in by cliffs picturesquely broken and green with underwood. The stream which poured down them was received at the bottom under a snow-arch, bold in its span as an old Italian bridge. A few yards east of the water-channel a goat track, sometimes difficult to follow, climbs the steep slope and the rocks above it, where the easiest course is only marked by the goats' droppings. Hands as well as feet are useful, but there is no difficulty for anyone accustomed to mountains.

Above the cliff we found a wide sloping meadow covered with cows. At first sight their presence seemed only to be accounted for by magic or a medium-like faculty in the herd for self-elevation. But I believe

due enquiry would have established the existence of a rationalistic explanation in the shape of a roundabout staircase not beyond the powers of an Italian heifer.

The lowest saddle in the high ridge before us was the Passo di Redorta. Despite the beauty of the day there was little distant view and no peak near enough at hand to tempt to further exertion. Val Maggia itself was almost hidden by the vertical lines of a bold, many-headed buttress, and the eye ranged over the wilderness of its mountain-ridges, a savage expanse of ruined gneiss naked of snow and void of prominent peaks or bristling ridges. The rock cannot, like the firmer granites of Val Masino or the Adamello, offer any stubborn resistance to the action of the atmosphere. Hence the mountain-tops are one mass of comparatively level ruin. Those who have looked down from some Syrian hilltop on an ancient city, of which the ponderous materials cumber the ground, while not a column is left standing, may exactly picture to themselves the scene of desolation now offered on a vastly larger scale to our eyes by the ranges of Val Maggia. In contrast the head of Val Verzasca, lying as it were at our feet, was green, bright, and inviting.

We were joined on the pass by a young Verzascan, returning from a visit to relatives at Peccia, laden with a store of simple delicacies, such as white bread, honey and cheese. The pains he was at to transport such a burden suggested comparative poverty in the land we were entering. We descended together, but there was no need of any guide, as the valley lay always straight before us, and the ground, though excessively steep, was not precipitous. Near the foot of the descent a pretty fall tumbles off the right-hand hillside.

A mile further, at a waters-meet, stands Sonogno, a deserted savage-looking cluster of dingy stone houses, which, but for the whitewashed church, might be in Ossetia. There were no inhabitants in the streets, and those indoors, with the first instinct of savages and wild animals, hurriedly thrust their heads back again through their little square windows when we asked questions. It was with difficulty we succeeded in getting one word, a simple negative, in reply to our demand for a carriage.

For to this extreme corner of the mountains civilisation advances in the shape of a road which has been carried up from the lake at an expense of over £15,000, shared between the cantonal government and the communes. Its engineers would seem to have determined to make no needless ascent, and at the cost of cuttings, embankments, and lofty bridges, they have carried out their purpose in the most thorough manner. The workmanship of this remote track would bear comparison with most of the highways of Europe. But the proverb of the ass taken to the water's brink seems to apply to Val Verzasca. No force seems capable of inducing the upper villages to use the boon intended for them. As in the East a few years ago the old camel-track over Lebanon was still trodden bare, while the grass grew on the new road made by French enterprise, so here no wheels seemed ever to have worn in the fresh stones. The nine miles to Lavertezzo must be walked.

The upper branch of the valley, although hemmed in by bold mountains, is somewhat monotonous, and the foreground is too often defaced by a broad torrent-bed. At the village of Brione Val Verzasca displays the first landscape which is likely to leave any lasting impres-

sion. The range on the right suddenly breaks off in a perpendicular crag of singular boldness; and as the road, raised on a lofty embankment, crosses a tributary stream a long vista of receding lines of cliff and chestnut trees is seen for some minutes. This is Val d'Ossola, through which runs the shortest and probably the most beautiful path to Bignasco.

From this point to the lake for some fifteen miles the bed of the Verzasca is simply a narrow cleft in the mountains, sinking deeper and deeper, until at last it opens upon Lago Maggiore, at the village of Gordola, opposite Magadino. Below Brione a great barrier, probably a mountain-fall, is thrown right across the valley, which at the same time drops considerably. The road makes a zigzag amidst the wildest tangle of boulders and chestnut-trees, then leaps boldly on to the opposite rocks, and creeps along a shelf blasted beside the blue tumbling stream.

As far as Lavertezzo the trench is wide enough at the bottom to give room for a few fields and houses. But this is not an agricultural district. The natives we met, a strong, wild-looking race, were all stone-quarriers, woodmen, or charcoal-burners. Many of them were employed where a timber slide, built on an unusual scale, falls over the cliffs from the mouth of a side-glen in the western range, through which a hill-path leads over to Maggia.

For the next few miles the valley bends constantly, and Lavertezzo seems to be always round the next corner. As at last we approach the village the river, sliding out from amidst huge grey boulders, two of them joined by a slender arch, is suddenly checked. The water rests motionless in a chain of the most delicious pools—deep-green, transparent bubbling crystals

—contained in basins of the whitest granite, smooth and polished as if made for a Roman bath. Henceforth it glistens no more in the sunshine, but roars or rests deep in a hidden cleft until it flows out to the fever-stricken plain of Gordola.

Lavertezzo itself consists of a campanile, a church, and a few white houses, crowded into a green corner above the meeting of two streams. Its name is adorned in maps with one of those curly horns which indicate a post-station. Here at least we reckoned on finding something on wheels. But a difficulty hitherto only dimly foreshadowed now met us full in the face with stunning force. Our hopes were crushed by a universal outcry of 'strada rotta.' But we still did not comprehend the full force of the emphasis laid on the last word, and while accepting the fact that our legs must carry us over the remaining eighteen kilomètres to Locarno, looked for nothing more than the ordinary amount of breakage caused by a mountain-storm—one bridge gone, or at most two. What we had seen in the upper valley was not of a character to prepare us for any very serious damage.

But the whole force of the great thunderstorm three nights before had concentrated itself on the ridges round the head of Lago Maggiore. The rain-torrents rushing with unrestrained fury from these lofty crests (7,000 to 8,000 feet) down the barren hillsides, and gathering impetus with every foot of fall, had filled and overflowed all the channels, tearing as they went huge rocks out of either bank, mixing themselves with the soil till they became as much earth as water, and sweeping away every obstruction which lay across their path.

Everywhere the steep slopes, saturated by the ter-

rible deluge, had given way. The road might be said to be effaced rather than broken. For mile after mile two-thirds of its breadth was buried in mud washed down from the upper hillsides.

The post-house of Vogorno, a solitary farm by the roadside, was in a lamentable plight. The stables had been carried away, and the whole front of the house was blocked with mud. At every few yards we came on immense barricades, the work of some puny trickle which now wandered almost invisible amongst the ruin it had wrought. In the least exposed spots stones as big as a hat-box were lying in the middle of the road. The larger torrents, thought worthy of bridges, had carried away the arches set over them, leaving deep gaps to be clambered round. Even a magnificent bridge, standing at a height at least 200 feet over a lateral ravine, had been undermined and swept bodily away. It was necessary to descend into the torrent-bed and scramble up the opposite bank. Another still loftier arch, one of the most striking works of its kind in the Alps, had alone escaped the general destruction, owing to its piers being built into the solid rock about 150 feet above the ordinary water-level.

Yet, though the road was destroyed and the hillside scored in many places by the terrible paths of the rocks and torrents, the general aspect of the landscape was hardly affected. The left bank, round the deep ravines of which the road, or what was left of it, circled incessantly, was always steep and broken. But across the river the chestnuts and rocks yielded, as the hills rose, to vineyards and fields of maize. The valley was all ravine, but high on the mountains were sunny bays and promontories, shining with villages bright and festal as

only Italian villages are. A horizontal streak drawn across the face of a range of mural cliffs was the road linking these communes to Locarno. In the variety and boldness of its scenery this portion of Val Verzasca seemed to us equal to any of the southern defiles of the Alps.

At last the gorge expanded, and the broad surface of the most beautiful of the Italian lakes spread across the centre of the landscape. The most beautiful, for to me it seems that spaciousness of shining surface—the quality which made Thrasimene so dear to Perugino—is an essential in lake scenery. In narrow, many-winding lakes the multitude of straight shore lines is apt to cut off harshly all the mountain shapes, and to be an offence to the eye, which would be better contented by the accidents of a green valley than with the smooth water-floor. The landscapes of Como, fascinating in their rapid changes—now picturesque and gay, now wild and severe—are too confined and crowded for perfect beauty. Garda is noble in its sealike expanse, but the shapes of its hills cannot compare with the stately Greek charm of the mountains round Baveno.

Above Gordola a whole hillside had given way, and the great earthslip had spread desolation amongst the lower vineyards. The brown ruin made a sad foreground to the exquisite view over the pale evening lake and the glowing hills. We took a short cut through the broken-down terraces to the bridge over the Verzasca, where we joined the high-road from Bellinzona to Locarno. Between us and the lake ran, in all the ugliness of unfinished novelty, a railway embankment.

Still three miles to Locarno, and no carriage on the road or boat on the water. In the morning we had

walked over a seven hours' pass, including an ascent of 6,000 feet; since midday we had covered some eighteen miles of road. Yet, although all more or less way-weary, we accepted the further march without much murmur. At a certain stage in the day the muscles become dogged and go on with machine-like energy, and to maintain the power of enjoyment it is only necessary to keep the mind from worrying itself with idle speculations as to details of time and distance. It is the old story. The sad or the impatient heart collapses, while the contented one 'goes all the day;' and in an Italian dusk on the shores of Maggiore it is easy to be contented.

Locarno itself had suffered severely from the storm. The channel of the small stream which divides the town had been overfilled by a deluge of horrible black mud, which, bursting out like a lava flood into the streets, had flowed down them, breaking into the shops on the ground floor, and finally spreading itself out in a pool several feet deep over the wide open space in front of the Albergo della Corona.

Locarno is pretty well accustomed to violent catastrophes. A few years ago the roof of the principal church gave way under a heavy fall of snow, and, crushing in during mass, killed or wounded half the congregation. Inundations are almost as frequent as earthquakes at Torre del Greco, and here, as on the Bay of Naples, familiarity with the outrages of nature seems to breed indifference, if not contempt. The population of Locarno took the damage done as much as a matter of course as the 'Times' reader in September a shocking railway accident. The men in their broad felts and the women with their fans were, as we en-

tered, all abroad for the evening stroll, chatting and looking on cheerfully at the labourers still at work removing the rubbish. Shopkeepers had already reopened their stores, and were endeavouring to remove from their wares the traces of the recent mud-bath.

No lives had been lost here, but across the water at Magadino the storm had been more fatal. Several houses had been carried into the lake, and so suddenly that in one case the inhabitants were drowned.

Next to Val Maggia, Val Centovalli is the largest of the valleys which open on the fertile plain behind Locarno.[1] It is, in fact, not so much a valley as a broad line of depression through the hill-region separating the basin of Domo d'Ossola from the lake. The opening thus offered by nature has, owing probably to political jealousy, never been taken advantage of. The lower Val Centovalli is Italian, the upper basin of the Melezza and the short eastern Val Vigezzo Swiss, and no road passable for wheeled vehicles crosses the frontier. On the whole, however, lovers of nature gain. But for political exigencies Val Canobbina might never have been pierced.

This glen, as its name implies, opens behind Canobbio, a town reached in two hours from Locarno, by a most beautiful road along the western shore of the lake. On the hillside facing north, and a mile inland, is a large bathing establishment or summer health-resort

[1] Between the two valleys mentioned above is Val Onsernone (see *Alps Guide*, p. 315, and Appendix) penetrated for some distance by a carriage-road. In a lively article in the fifth Jahrbuch of the Swiss Alpine Club, Herr Hoffmann Burkhardt describes the scenery as most varied and charming, and the road 'as a magnificent example of a mountain-road, and a most striking evidence of the talent of the Tessinirs in this department of human industry.'

known as 'La Salute,' and chiefly frequented by Italians. The situation is charming, high enough to command over a green foreground the whole upper bay of the lake closed by the bold mountains of Val Verzasca.

Val Canobbina is rather a tangle of glens than a valley. The road climbs at once into a deep dell, refreshed by perpetual waters and green with verdure only broken where the jagged rocks close in on the stream to form a gorge, or 'orrido' in the local phrase. Oak thickets and chestnut copses clothe the slopes; cyclamens, common as daisies at home, bend their graceful heads on every sunny bank.

At one spot four valleys join, and it is impossible to guess which will be chosen. The road plunges into the narrowest, and forces its way near the torrent, until, suddenly turning in steep zigzags to scale the hillside, it breaks off altogether.[1] The carriage halts, the driver shouts, and tall, handsome girls drop down the stairs from the neighbouring village of Orasso, and eagerly grasp the luggage. The ascent is continued by a rough path, which circles terrace-like for several miles between white hamlets and green hills. Nature shows herself here very friendly, but also very southern, and full of a delicate subdued beauty quite apart from the more homely charm of northern scenery.

The glen again twists round on itself, and we almost fancy ourselves in an issueless labyrinth, when the road suddenly reappears at our feet, and boldly rushes into a tunnel which might not be much on a railroad, but is a great work for a country byway.

On the further side the road, blasted out of the face

[1] The carriage-road was expected to be finished throughout in 1873.

of the rock, makes its entrance into an upland basin, still part of Val Canobbina. On a brow in its centre rises the village of Finero. The festival of the patron saint of the church had collected thither all the neighbourhood, and given occasion for a very tournament of bowls, a game which in the lives of Northern Italians fills the place occupied by croquet in those of some of our curates and officers.

Beyond Finero a broad low ridge sends down a stream northward into the Italian head of Val Centovalli, and the road rapidly descends through pine forests. We are no longer in a mountain-maze, the hills stand back and leave in their midst a happy oasis crowded with cultivation and life, and blest with the gifts alike of mountain and of plain, the fresh Alpine breeze and water, and the sun and fertility of Lombardy. In the midst of maize-fields lie spacious well-built towns; on the slopes, shaded by their walnut and chestnut groves, a score of brilliant whitewashed villages.

What a living brightness in southern lands is the white which in the north, among our duller colours and opaque atmospheres, is only a dead chill! Beyond the Alps it seems the appropriate colour for men's homes. We in England can ill afford to dispense with the suggestion of warmth and dryness given by red brick and tiles. But domestic architecture is a subject too painful for the victims of ninety-nine years' leases and speculative builders to think about. Few Londoners can bear to look without a shudder on the outside of what they call 'home.' If the old fashion of white paint was chilly, it was at least better than the new stucco squares and streets, the exact colour of our native fogs and roadways. Why should we live in a monotone of mud,

as if we were some species of snail whose only chance in the struggle for existence lies in making itself and its shell undistinguishable from the surroundings?

The plain in which stand the prosperous towns of Malesco and Santa Maria Maggiore, though called Val Vigezzo, sends down its torrent to Locarno. Such an imperceptible bank of heather as divides the Drave from the Pusterthal still severs us from the western Val Vigezzo. In clear weather Monte Rosa must shine upon this upland basin; in the pouring rain all I saw of the drive to Domo d'Ossola was a narrow picturesque river-bed and a wide sodden plain, at the end of which a ferry close to the town gates carried us and our carriage across the swollen waters of the Tosa.

S O X
R I O

CHAPTER III.

WEST OF THE BERNINA.

THE PEAKS AND PASSES OF VAL MASINO.[1]

Il montera, descendra, traversera, remontera, redescendra, retraversera, restera.—*French Play.*

And when I most go here and there,
I then do most go right. SHAKESPEARE.

THE MOUNTAINS OF VAL MASINO—THE AVERSTHAL—MADRISER PASS—VAL BREGAGLIA—BOCCA PASS—PROMONTOGNO—VAL BONDASCA—PASSO DI FERRO—SASSI DEL MASINO—PASSO DI MONTE BRESONE—THE FOSCIO GLACIER.

To the crowd, which having sat down in a draught on the roof of Europe spends its time mostly in bemoaning the cold, to the water-drinkers of St. Moritz or the pensioners of Pontresina, the mountains of Val Masino are unknown. Yet had they eyes to see they might often be attracted by the vision of two square towers rising far beyond the blue lakes and the green ridge of the Maloya, and shining like an enchanted keep through the warm haze of Italy.[2] They are indeed the ramparts of Paradise, for on the further side they look down upon the gardens of Lago di Como.

[1] This and the following chapter were originally written as a paper to be read before the Alpine Club.

[2] See Vignette.

Even to climbers this western wing of the Bernina has remained little known. So long ago as 1862 Messrs. Kennedy and Stephen carried at the second assault its proudest peak, the Monte della Disgrazia. But I could count on my fingers the names of all the Englishmen who have since penetrated Val Masino. Foreign Alpine Clubs have for the most part held aloof. The Swiss have found enough to do elsewhere, and have not as yet chosen Val Bregaglia—politically a Swiss valley—as the 'gebiet' of one of the summer 'excursions' in which they contrive to combine so happily the features of a prolonged picnic and a mountain-battue. That practical, and in some respects energetic, body, the Italian Alpine Club, is only beginning to turn its attention to a district containing one of the few wholly Italian peaks of over 12,000 feet.

Those who have been already somewhat disappointed in the Upper Engadine and the heart of the Bernina will perhaps argue that there cannot be much worth seeing in its extremities, where the peaks are lower and the ice-fields as a whole less extensive. Such an assumption, however, would be ill-founded. For scenic effects, every one will allow, the measurement of a mountain must be taken, not from the sea level, but from its actual base. Moreover the lower the base the richer and more varied will be the contrast in vegetation. On applying this test we find that the Punta Trubinesca[1] towers 8,500 feet above the chestnut trees of Promontogno, while Piz Bernina itself rises 1,000 feet

[1] Herr Theobald states that the villagers of Bondo give the name of Trubinesca to the Cima di Tschingel of the Federal map. Herr Ziegler, the author of a new and very beautifully executed map of this portion of the Alps, confirms this statement, adding that 'Turbinesca' is the correct spelling, and he has accordingly changed the names of the two peaks. As

less, and far more gradually, above Pontresina. The icy ridges of the Disgrazia soar 11,000 feet above the vineyards of the Val Tellina, or as much as Mont Blanc above Courmayeur.

The peaks, moreover, are of a durable granite. They have, therefore, that combined boldness of outline and solidity which often belongs to this hardy rock. Other mountains have the air of having been built up; granite peaks seem rather to have been rough-hewn like a sculptor's block out of a larger mass. In glaciers the group possesses almost every known variety. The Bondasca and the eastern glaciers of the Disgrazia worthily represent the frozen cataract type, tumbling in broken billows from cope to base of the mountain; the Albigna is an ice-lake fed by huge snow-basins; the Forno a stately stream surpassing in length the Morteratsch.

Here, however, I gladly break off from the conventional tone of recommendation in which discoverers are apt to assert their own merits.

For the people who either cannot or will not walk, the large class which, taking advantage of the shade of contempt already attached to the epithet by Vatican infallibility, I may venture to call the 'Subalpine Club,' Val Masino has few attractions. Inaccessible on three sides except to pedestrians, this valley will probably remain for long a sure refuge for the misanthropic climber driven away from the peaks of

as a rule, local usage should, no doubt, be followed. But in the present instance, the mistake is of such long standing, that an endeavour to correct it would only lead to confusion, and I have adhered to the nomenclature of the Federal map. It is much to be regretted that Herr Ziegler's map is wholly inaccurate with regard to the glaciers of Val Masino, and the position of many of the ridges dividing its lateral glens.

the central Bernina by the demands of the guides or the clatter of his fellow-countrymen.

In the summer of 1864 I set out from Splugen with two companions and François Devouassoud for the Bernina. Our route led us through the Avers Thal, a cross-road of travel still but little frequented, though no better reason than fashion can be assigned for its neglect. For mile after mile the Averser Rhein, a strong blue-grey torrent, leaps and roars between masses of marble crag tinted with lichens, and clasped about by huge pine-roots. Tributary streams rush down from the rugged precipices towering on either side the gorge, and shoot with a creamy rush into the deep cleft which holds the larger flood.

Above the long defile lies a broad grassy upland dotted with some of the highest villages in Europe, and encompassed by green slopes which divide the waters of three seas. The landscape is, it is true, tame to the eye; but on a sunny August morning, when the vast hayfield is alive with mowers and the air fragrant with the smell of ripe grasses, it contains much to tickle other senses than sight.

We turned up a side branch of the valley, the Madriser Thal. Near its head a white line seamed the slopes we had yet to surmount. On nearer approach this resolved itself into a laboriously-built stone staircase, showing that we were on what was once a frequented passage for beasts of burden. Judging from the solidity and care with which it had originally been put together the 'pavé' might have been Roman. I do not venture to say it is. More probably in the middle ages this was an alternative route for the Septimer. Perhaps the indefatigable explorer and describer of his

native Alps, Herr Theobald, or some other curious enquirer, has told the date and story. If so I have failed to fall on the passage.

It was from the ridge which divides the Rhine from the Maira that I gained my first general view of the mountains of Val Masino. Opposite, and separated from our stand-point, the Madriser Pass, only by the deep but narrow trench of Val Bregaglia, a great mountain-mass glowed in the afternoon sunshine. Its base was wrapped in chestnut woods, its middle girt with a belt of pines, above spread a mantle of the eternal snow. The sky-line was formed by a coronet of domes and massive pinnacles carved out of grey rocks, whose jagged yet stubborn forms revealed the presence of granite. Full in front the curving glacier of Val Bondasca filled the space beneath the smooth cliff-faces, and at one spot a gap between them irresistibly suggested a new pass for the morrow.

The descent on the southern side of the Madriser Pass, long, rough, and extremely steep, leads to the village of Soglio, which rests on a terrace high above the valley, and commands a noble view of the granite peaks. Here stands a deserted villa belonging to the old Grisons family of De Salis, surrounded by ruinous gardens and tall poplars, an Italian intrusion on a landscape otherwise Alpine. Mossy banks shaded by old Spanish chestnuts slope down to the high-road and the river. On the opposite side, near the tunnel from which it takes its name, we found the 'Albergo della Galleria,' which provides clean rooms and moderate fare for those who are bent on penetrating the Val Bondasca, the most beautiful of the side glens of Val Bregaglia.

It was not my first visit to this valley. Long

before Mr. Ball had written his handbook I had found in Professor Theobald's excellent little volume on Canton Graubrunden[1] a most exciting description of the waterfalls and ice-tables of the Albigna Glacier and the rocky splendours of Val Bondasca. At the same time the appearance on maps of the Forno Glacier as a long ice-stream equal to the Morteratsch had excited in me keen curiosity. But my companions in 1862, although induced to halt a day at Vico Soprano, and to venture as far as the level of the Albigna Glacier, could not be persuaded that the Zocca was 'fit for ladies,' and my explorations were reduced to an ineffectual race against time to reach a point overlooking the Forno.

The Upper Bregaglia, seen from a carriage, is a green Alpine valley showing, except in such additions as man has made to the landscape, little trace of the approach to Italy. Pines are still the prevailing trees; near at hand the mountains are green; higher up naked grey pinnacles saw the sky or cut through the vapour-wreaths.

A mile or two above Vico Soprano clouds of sunbeam-painted foam shoot up round the base of a white column, and the tourist, driven by the first cold days of September from the hill-barracks of the Engadine to the lake-palaces, takes out his 'Guide' and his notebook and ticks off as 'visited' another waterfall.

This is the fall of the Albigna, and close at hand the track to the Zocca branches off through the woods. It is a forest-path known only to smugglers and shepherds (and, I may add, chamois, for I once met two here within a mile of the high-road). Every passer-by, who has a real love of nature, and can endure for it a night

[1] *Naturbilder aus den Rhätischen Alpen*; Chur, 1861.

in a clean country inn, is strongly recommended to leave the road and climb at least as far as the foot of the glacier.

The scenery is best seen as a descent. From the wild bare crags of the inmost recesses of Val Masino and from the cold snows and savage ice-peaks of the Albigna, the traveller suddenly plunges over the edge of the uplands into a region of mountain-sides broken up by deep chasms fringed with pines and broad-leaved trees, and resonant with the roar of the great glacier torrent, which, scarcely released from its icy cradle, 'leaps in glory' down a stupendous cliff.

The Zocca Pass itself I have never crossed, but the omission can be supplied by the experience of friends. In ordinary years it is a simple glacier pass. But that it is not to be attempted without a guide or a rope the following history shows.

Two young converts to mountaineering set out from Val Masino for the pass, guideless, ropeless, axeless. The top was easily reached, but only a few yards below, on the northern side, a huge ice-moat, or 'bergschrund,' as a German guide would have called it, yawned suddenly at their feet. My friends hesitated, but clouds were rapidly gathering round the peaks, and a snowstorm impended. There was no time to be lost. The upper lip of the chasm was too steep to stand on until, by dabbling with the points of their alpenstocks, they had succeeded in making some sort of a staircase down to the brink at the point where it seemed best to take off for the jump. How they jumped or tumbled over they have never been able clearly to explain, but each maintains he did it in the best possible way, and both agree it was very uncomfortable. In many seasons this moat is entirely closed,

but it is evidently an obstacle not to be altogether disregarded, and unseen might be more dangerous than when gaping for its prey.

To return to Promontogno and 1864. Although the political frontier lies beyond Castasegna, several miles further down, the rocky spur which here closes the valley is the natural gate of Italy, the barrier between the pines and the chestnuts. The afternoon hours lingered pleasantly away as, stretched on the knoll behind the inn, we gazed up at the impending cliffs of the granitic range or fed our eyes with the rich woods of the lower valley and the purple hills beyond Chiavenna.

François meantime had gone off to the neighbouring village of Bondo to look for a porter who would consent to accompany us over a pass utterly unknown to the people of the country. For the 'Passo di Bondo' of the map became more mythical at every step. To cross the Bondasca Glacier to Val Masino was at least in the estimation of all Bregaglians to make a new pass; and this was to us Alpine novices a matter of no small contentment; for beginners ten years ago were not so audacious as those of the present day, who are satisfied with nothing short of the Weisshorn and Schreckhorn. Yet I cannot help thinking that by venturing only into moderate difficulties, where one guide among three could help us through, we learnt as much as by tying ourselves to two or three first-rate men and daring everything through the strength of our guides.

We knew pretty well what was before us, for from the Madriser Pass the whole route had been displayed. François, remembering that an unknown icefall had to be dealt with, was anxious to be off early, and our own enthusiasm was sufficient to carry us through the ordeal of a night breakfast with less than the usual morose-

ness. By two A.M. the provisions were packed and we were on the march.

There was no moon, but the heaven was throbbing with large white stars, and coronets sparkled on the heads of the dim giants of the southern range. Leaving behind us the sleeping hamlet of Bondo, the path climbed steeply through a fir-wood until it reached the short stretch of level ground, which is called Val Bondasca. An expanse of grass and wood is here spread out as a carpet at the very base of the granite cliffs. Scarcely in the Alps are there finer precipices than those that lead up the eye to the far-off brows of the Cima di Tschingel and Trubinesca. In front the glen is closed by steep rocks, over which the glacier pours in a long cascade.

As we strolled over the dewy lawns we had full leisure to watch the first signs of the coming day. A faint gleam spread over the eastern sky, and was reflected on the pinnacles above us, gradually drawing forth their forms out of the shadow, until at last a rosy blush played for a few moments on their crags; then the clear light of daybreak was shed upon peak and valley, and ice and rock alike were bathed in the universal sunshine.

Near another group of châlets we crossed the stream a second time. A well-contrived path, winding up by steep zigzags amidst underwood and creeping pines, lifted us from the glen to the upper alp, a sloping shelf of pasturage on the east of the glacier. Bearing to the right we made for the edge of a level portion of the ice, where it rests for a space between the upper and lower falls. Our porter had halted at the highest hut to get some milk from the solitary man who tended the goats

and pigs. The herdsman, who now saw us turn our backs upon the only pass he knew, the gap leading over to the Albigna Glacier, hurried after us, *jödelling* at the top of his voice, and pointing violently in the direction opposite to that we were taking.

He was too far below for words, and signs he would not comprehend, so, after some fruitless endeavours to quiet his mind, we went on our way, causing 'le bon garçon' (as François called him) to give vent to a last expostulatory chaunt before he returned to his goats to meditate upon our probable fate.

The usual rough borderland between earth and ice scrambled over, we halted for breakfast on a smooth piece of ice conveniently furnished with stone stools and tables. Over our heads towered a range of pinnacles, one of which is known as Piz Cacciabella. In form and grouping they closely resemble, on a smaller scale, the Chamonix Aiguilles, as seen from the 'Plan.' Divided from them by a snowy bay, the source of the glacier, rose the splendid peak of the Punta Trubinesca. Only granite could show such a tremendous block, free from flaw or joint, and hopeless to the most fly-like climber. Its broad grey precipices looked as smooth as if they had been planed; and, Mr. Ball having pronounced the summit inaccessible on the other side, it seemed to us at the time a pretty problem for rising Alpine Clubmen.

Our ambition, however, had never soared to such a conquest, and we were content to discuss a matter nearer at hand, the upper ice-fall which separated us from the supposed pass. Opinions differed; François prophesied difficulties and five hours' work to the top; a sanguine spirit set it down as half an hour's walk.

The rope was soon put on, and we prepared to face the unknown.

I presume everyone who cares to take up these sketches has already felt sufficient interest in the Alps to endeavour to realise, even if he has not seen, the nature of an ice-fall. If he has not, he had better go and look at Mons. Loppé's pictures. No word-painting can give an idea of anything so unlike the usual phenomena of our temperate zone. A cream-cheese at once squeezed and drawn out, so that the surface split and isolated blocks stood up, might, if viewed through a magnifying glass, slightly resemble in form, though not in colour, the contorted ice. But the imagination would have to look on from the point of view of the smallest mite.

The lower ice-falls differ considerably from the highest. In one case the material is hard ice; in the other, closely compacted snow. In the ice the rifts are longer, narrower and more frequent, and fewer towers rise above the general level; the snow or névé opens in wider but less continuous chasms, sinks in great holes like disused chalk-pits, and throws up huge blocks and towers, which the sun slowly melts into the most fantastic shapes. The higher fall is generally both the most imposing and formidable to look at, and the easiest to get through. The maze here is less intricate, and the very size of its features makes it easier to choose a path. But it is unsafe to shout before you are well out of the wood. At the very top, where the strain caused by the steepening slope first cracks the glacier, one huge rent often stretches across from edge to edge, and unless Providence throws a light causeway or a slender arch across the gulf, there will be work for the ice-axe before you stand on the upper edge. Some crack in the

pit's wall must be dug into steps, the huge disorderly blocks which make a floor must be got through, and then escape must be found in the same way that entrance was made, by a ladder of your own contriving. Such a passage may often cost an hour's hard work.

The Bondasca Glacier above where we struck it was riven by a network of small crevasses. Some could be jumped, and the larger clefts were generally bridged, and thanks to a sharp night's frost the arches were in good bearing order. With occasional step-cutting and frequent zigzags we got clear of the thickest labyrinth and stood victorious on the upper snow-fields. They rose before us in a succession of frozen banks to a well-defined gap flanked by two snow hummocks. The western was connected by a long curtain of rock with the Punta Trubinesca. After skirting the highest snow-bowl, we crossed the deep moat which marks the point where the true mountain-form rises out of the folds of its snowy vestment, and in a moment more stood on the crest of a curling wave, fringed with icicles for spray.

Where we had expected to see only the rock-surrounded basin of the Val dei Bagni, we looked down on a deep, long valley, running southwards towards the Val Tellina.

At the second glance our eyes were caught by an enormous object lying in the centre of a grassy meadow. We were at once assured as to the identity of the valley. The block could be nothing else than the 'natural curiosity' of Val Masino, the biggest boulder in the Alps. Its dimensions are given by Mr. Ball as—'Length, 250 feet; breadth, 120 feet; height, 140 feet;' or as tall as an average church tower, and large enough to fill up many a London square. Legend has

nothing to tell about this monstrous block, and we are left to determine as we like, whether it fell from some neighbouring mountain going to ruin in the course of nature, or was dropped by the devil, on one of those errands of mischief which are always so fortunately interrupted by the opportune appearance of the pious peasant.

We had only been two hours from our last resting-place, and the day was still young, so that we could well afford a halt. As there are some tourists whose chief object is to get to the end of their tours, so there are climbers who throughout the day seem to long only to arrive in as few hours as possible at the end of it. But peaks and passes and not inns were our goal, and we had no desire to hurry on. We chose a warm corner in the sun-facing rocks, whence by lifting our heads we looked over intervening ridges to the Alps of Glarus, and raked the Punta Trubinesca and its neighbours, now viewed end on, as weird a pile of granite as I have seen in many a long day's wanderings.

From the snow-dome on our right a lofty and extraordinarily jagged ridge stretched out at right angles to the main chain, the barrier, probably, between the two branches of Val Masino.[1] I wanted to climb the dome and reconnoitre, but clouds had partially covered the blue sky, and were whisking, now one way now the other, as the gust took them, as if playing a wild game of hide-and-seek amongst the granite towers. A storm seemed probable, and François thought it foolish to waste time.

[1] The junction of this spur, the Cima Sciascia, with the principal ridge, has been placed too far east in all maps previous to the Alpine Club Map of Switzerland.

We were clearly not on the legendary Passo di Bondo,[1] but on another 'Col' of our own contriving, leading somewhere into the Val di Mello, the eastern branch of Val Masino. The descent looked practicable. Why not attempt it and complete the pass? The distance to be retraced along the valley to our sleeping quarters, the 'Bagni,' could scarcely be worth considering. So after erecting a solid stoneman, and trusting him with the usual card-filled bottle, we set out.

The last man had not set foot on the ice when François disappeared to his shoulders beneath the surface. Looking through the hole he had made we could appreciate the use of the rope. A dark green chasm, some thirty feet wide, yawned beneath us, its depths scarcely visible in the light thus suddenly let in upon them. The glacier we were descending fell away steeply, and became so broken and troublesome that we tried the rocks on the left. The change was for the worse, and we soon came back and cut our way through the difficulties.

As soon as the rocks ceased to be precipitous we took to them again. But they were not pleasant footing. We found ourselves committed to a slope of boulders so shockingly loose that the slightest provocation sent half-a-dozen rolling from under our feet, and piled at so high an angle that when once started they bounded away at a pace which promised to take them straight to the valley. In such places an impe-

[1] I am disposed to doubt whether a direct pass from the Bondasca Glacier to the western branch of Val Masino was ever effected before 1864. It is true there is a tradition embodied in the Swiss Federal map of such a pass. It is possible, however, that smugglers may have gone up to the Passo di Ferro, and then scrambled westward over the rocks into the basin of the Forcellina Alp.

tions companion always insists on stopping to take off his gaiters and then following at a run. You have scarcely missed him before his return is announced by a whole volley of grape rattling about your ears, while a playful shout warns you to make way for a 100-pounder boulder which is ricochetting down on your heels with the force of a cannon-ball. Then your friend comes up with a pleased air, as much as to say, 'Didn't I come down that well?' and it is hard not to remonstrate with him in language the use of which should be restricted to divines.

Halting beside some water which filtered out at the foot of the boulders, we enjoyed a beautiful view of the Disgrazia and the wild range behind us. On our right was a long comb, whose teeth had been tortured by time and weather into all sorts of quaint shapes; one rock bent over like a crooked finger, in another place a window was pierced through the crest. At a hasty glance one might have compared the fantastic shapes to those assumed so frequently by dolomitic limestone, but closer observation showed the tendency to curving outlines and to sharpness of edge peculiar to crystalline rock. In the dolomite districts the separate crags, cut up as they may be by flaws at right angles to the lie of the strata, have not, except from considerable distances, the same flamelike outlines. In any near view the layers of which they are built up become conspicuous, and often, as in the Brenta chain, have all the appearance of courses of masonry.

Bearing to the left from the first huts on the Alpe di Ferro, we crossed a stream just below a tempting pool, in which five minutes later we were all plunging. At the next step in the descent our path re-crossed the

water, and zigzagged steeply down the hillside, which was covered with broom and Scotch heather. Passing a succession of pretty cascades, we entered the Val di Melló, near a group of châlets, whence a stony mule-road led us in half an hour to San Martino, the village situated at the fork of the valley. It is a cluster of untidy stone houses, with nothing to delay the passer-by except a douanier's bureau and a tobacco store.

We now met a car-road running up the Val dei Bagni—the western fork of the valley. The floor of the glen soon rises suddenly—a granite valley, like the national prosperity, always advances by leaps and starts—and the road indulges in a couple of short zig-zags. We are again in the heart of the mountains, hemmed in by pine-clad slopes and cliffs too steep to allow any view even of the summits behind them. In this *cul-de-sac* there are no signs of a village. It is a spot where one would expect to find no one but a Bergamasque shepherd with his longtailed sheep. But shepherds do not make roads, nor do they often receive visitors such as the portly dame who advances towards us, supported by a scarcely perceptible donkey, and herself overshadowed by a vast crimson umbrella resembling the mushroom of a pantomime. Shepherds, moreover, are not in the habit of constructing little paths like those, too faltering and purposeless for any practical use, which wander off here and there into the woods; nor do they employ their leisure hours in planting stems of fir-trees in a futile manner along the sides of the road, and covering their branches, as the foliage withers away, with tricolour flags.

The meaning of these attempts to fasten a little paltry embroidery on nature's robes is explained when

as we turn a corner and enter the bowl-shaped hollow which forms the head of the glen we discover under the hillside a long, low building—the Bagni del Masino. The presence of a sulphur spring has caused this remote spot to be chosen as one of the summer retreats of Northern Italian society.

The bath-houses in the Lombard Alps do not in any way add to the beauty of the landscape. The consistent regard for economy shown in the simplicity of their architecture and the roughness of their construction may possibly delight the heart of some shareholder, and would perhaps have commended them to the favourable notice of a late First Commissioner of Works. But to the common eye the result is not attractive. Outside we see a long two-storied barrack built with unshaped stones and abundance of mortar, the surface of which, never having been finished in any way, has a dusky-brown hue and ruinous aspect; unpainted woodwork; balconies unbalustraded, and to the last degree perilous. Internally and on the ground floor a long range of dingy fly-spotted rooms, devoted respectively to smoke, billiards, literature, and eating, and decorated with portraits of the reigning family of Italy and full-blown lithographic beauties. Above, equally long passages, and nests of scantily furnished, but tolerable and, so far as beds are concerned, clean cabins.

Our first enquiry, whether the house contained baths—at many so-called bath-houses the waters are only taken internally—called up a triumphant smile on the countenance of the waiter who had welcomed us. As he ushered us along the passages a strong smell of sulphur raised a suspicion that we might find ourselves in hot water. In another moment this fear was converted

into a certainty. The beaming waiter ushered us into a little room, or rather large stove-heated oven, surrounded by four wells, each some five feet deep, and full to the brim of sulphureous waters. On the one hand we had gone too far to retreat with credit, on the other we were incapable of any prolonged endurance of the purgatorial temperature. So having made but a hasty plunge we dashed on our clothes and fled back to our rooms, ignoring the stove on which we ought to have sat and submitted to a process of slow baking. This ordeal and a good dinner completed, we had leisure to study the patients, for the most part Milanese, with a sprinkling of local Val Tellina priests and farmers. The mineral waters of the place are, no need to say, like all mineral waters, invincible enemies to every disease to which humanity, male or female, is exposed. Such being the case, it was a subject for reasonable regret that with few exceptions the visitors appeared to suffer from no more serious complaint than a difficulty in composing their minds to any mental exertion beyond a game at bowls or a shot at a popinjay.

Let us sit down for a few moments on the bench before the door and observe the pastimes going on around. Three leading spirits, the doctor, a curé with his skirts tucked up to his knees, and a Milanese visitor clad in a suit of the large yellow check so often affected by Italians, are in the middle of a contest with bowls, the progress of which is watched by a deeply interested circle of cigarette-smokers. The Milanese is nowhere, but the struggle between the priest and doctor becomes terribly exciting, and the 'bravas' attract even a group of Bergamasque shepherds, honest fellows despite their bandit style of dress, who have been lounging in

the background. The rest of the patients are burning powder at a mark set up in the wood a few paces off, or hanging over a game of billiards, which seems to us a good deal more like a sort of Lilliputian ninepins.'

We have scarcely withdrawn to our rooms satiated with the sight of so much innocent happiness when a loud ringing of the bell which welcomes new arrivals assures us that Victor Emmanuel must be appearing in person to pursue the chamois of the neighbourhood. Hurrying to the window we see an excited crowd gazing and gesticulating at the sky in a manner which suggests that they have been visited either by a heavenly vision or temporary insanity. In fact a small fire-balloon has been sent up. After a time another peal of the bell announces its descent, the Bergamasque shepherd boys set off up the hillside to secure the fragments, and night closes upon the scene.

To most of us there comes a time when the pleasures of infancy pall. But these water-drinkers seem to have found the true fountain of youth and oblivion, where

> ——— they lie reclined
> On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind,
> For they lie beside their nectar ——

and, far removed from the politics and stock-exchanges of a lower world, can treat even the leading articles which occasionally creep up to them at the bottom of a fruit cart

> Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong.

Happy Milanese! for is not Val Masino better than Margate?

It is difficult, perhaps, to recommend the Baths as a stopping-place for any length of time to the ordinary traveller. Though so high (3,750 feet) they are too

much in a hole for beauty. But the situation, if it would not satisfy an artist, is not in the least commonplace, and has even a curious fascination of its own. On every side the eyes are met at once by almost perpendicular rocks capped here and there by sharp spires of granite. These cliffs are not bare and harsh like those of Val di Mello, but green with forest and bright with falling waters. They seem friendly protectors to the smooth oasis of grass and pines. The suggestion of savage wildness close at hand added by the few glimpses of the upper peaks heightens the sense of peace and seclusion in which the charm of the spot is to be found.

The little plain is quite large enough to suffice for the very moderate demands of the Italian visitors, but it will hardly satisfy the average British craving for exercise. You must, however, either stop where you are or climb a staircase; these upright hills will not easily lend themselves, like the slopes of the Upper Engadine, to short breaths and untrained limbs. To enjoy Val Masino you must be either sick or sound; it is not a place for invalids or idlers.

To the mountaineer the bathing establishment is invaluable. It is true that as a passing guest he pays a bill large when compared to the charges made to the 'pensionnaires,' and that his guide will probably have still greater reason to complain. But he obtains in exchange the boon of a good bed and an excellent dinner in a situation admirably chosen for glacier expeditions. Moreover, owing to the general custom of the patients of keeping up impromptu dances till midnight, a waiter can generally be persuaded to provide breakfast before he goes to bed; and not only is the

customary difficulty in an early start entirely absent, but it is sometimes hard to avoid being sped too soon by a host whose night begins only when yours ends.

At half-past twelve the voice of the inexorable François was heard at the doors: 'Bonjour, messieurs, il fait encore beau temps.' One of us who had gone to sleep in the middle of a thunderstorm gave a deep groan of disappointment at the auspicious news. But in half-an-hour we were all gathered round the table at a meal which we had ordered, and now affected to treat in the light of a late supper. I need scarcely say the pretence was a miserable failure. Though the stars shone brightly in the narrow strip of sky visible between the steep mountain-crests, the night was so black that some precaution was considered necessary to prevent our falling off the edge of the road, and prematurely ending our Alpine investigations. The obliging waiter dexterously screwed up in paper a tallow candle after the model of a safety bedroom candlestick. But soon, as was to be expected, the shield caught fire, and our impromptu lantern disappeared in a blaze.

François then beguiled the dark hours by an account of the cross-examination he had undergone the evening before. 'What was our illness? Should we take the waters? Where had we come from? How long should we stay? Where were we going?' Such were the enquiries of the guests; and when they heard that we had come over one glacier and were departing next day by another with the intention of sleeping at a place two days' drive off by the only road they knew, they were fairly at their wits' end.

The road which had seemed so long the day before was soon traversed, and leaving our old track to scale

the hillside, we continued in the trough of Val di Mello, until just as dawn was breaking behind the Disgrazia we reached the châlets of La Rasica. The incident which now followed, interesting to me as the origin of a valued friendship, must find a place here on account of the influence it had on all my further wanderings.

People were heard stirring inside one of the barns, and lights seen moving—a very unusual phenomenon at such an hour. For a moment we imagined we had caught a party of smugglers starting for the Zocca. But, conspicuous even in the darkness, a pair of white flannel trousers, such as no smuggler ever wore, issued from the door. Before we had time to speak they were followed by another and still more startling apparition. All we could at first make out was a large lantern, surrounded on all sides by long yellow spikes like conventional sunbeams or the edges of a saint's glory. A moment later the human being who carried the light became distinguishable, the rays resolved themselves into the bright leather cases of scientific instruments, and a voice announced that we were in the presence of Mr. Tuckett and his guides.

Still young and inexperienced as a mountain-climber, and knowing only by hearsay of the Alpine Club, I was at this time penetrated by a profound respect for that body. Its rank and file I believed to be as little hampered by the laws of gravity as the angels of the Talmud, of whom three could balance themselves upon a single pinnacle of the Temple. To its greater heroes I looked up as to the equals of those spirits whom their leader reminded—

> That in our proper motion we ascend
> Up towards our native seat; descent and fall
> To us are adverse.

For me, therefore, it was an awful moment when I found myself thus unexpectedly in the presence of the leader himself—the being whose activity, ubiquity, and persistence in assault have made, at least in the lips of wearied guides, 'der Tuckett' 'almost' equivalent to 'der Teufel.' Conscious, moreover, of intentions on the new pass of the country—the one possible link by which Val Masino could be brought within a day's walk of the Upper Engadine—I felt an inward presentiment that this great mountain-slayer must be there on a similar errand, and a fear that he might punish our poaching in some very serious manner.

Perhaps it was partly the guilty expression of our countenances which caused our suspicions to be returned and our party also to be taken for a band of smugglers whose acquaintance Mr. Tuckett had made on the Albigna Glacier the previous day. The mutual misapprehension having been speedily removed, our further fears were set at rest. The Disgrazia was the immediate object of Mr. Tuckett's ambition; and though he did intend to cross next day to the Engadine, his quiver was already so full of new peaks and passes that he could well afford to leave some small game for others.

It would have been pleasant to have united our parties, but we had an appointment to keep at St. Moritz, and could not venture to risk a detention by bad weather on the wrong side of the chain.

A steep ascent led to a miserable shelter where Mr. Tuckett and his friend left us, and to which they subsequently returned to spend an uncomfortable night. We were now on the upper pasturages, a wide desolate tract merging into the rocky heaps which fringe

several small glaciers descending from the highest summits.

Three ice-streams flowed towards us—one from immediately under the Pico della Speranza; the second from the angle in the chain under Monte Sissone; the third lay far more to the left, and was barred at its head by steep cliffs extending to the Monte Sissone, and broken only near that peak by a narrow snow-trough. The head of the central ice-stream was a broad saddle, and for this we determined to steer. I had a presentiment that it would overlook Val Malenco. But that point gained, it would be easy to reach the ridge of Monte Sissone, and probably without losing much time by the circuit.

We ascended for a long way over the boulders on the south of the central glacier. They offered villainous foothold, but the ice was so slippery that we gave them the preference, and were rewarded for our pains by finding some remarkably fine crystals. Leaving solid ground only a few hundred yards below the crest, we soon found ourselves on its summit. Beneath us, only at a much lower level, and cut off by an apparently impracticable cliff, was the glacier-field which encircles the head of Val Malenco. Beyond it rose the massive forms of the Bernina group. We lost no time here in looking at the view, but turned again upwards, following the ridge for some distance; then, at François' instance, we crossed a treacherous snow-slope to the left, and, after losing some of the height we had gained, reached the rocks. We and the porter took a pretty straight course up the peak of the Sissone, leaving François to make more to the left for the head of the snow-trough. Towards the summit the rocks became

steep, and afforded an exciting scramble. As we worked up a gully the first man put his arm round a large and apparently firmly-wedged stone, which tottered with his weight. Had it fallen, we should have had a sensation something like that of jumping out of the way of a cannon-ball. When our heads rose above the level of the ridge, we were glad to see snow-slopes on the other side, falling away steeply to a great glacier basin. Now we felt our pass was secured. A pile of broken crags still rose above us: a short race, and we were seated on the highest boulder, one of the corner-stones of the Bernina chain.

The Monte Sissone, although insignificant in height compared with the giants which encircle the Morteratsch, claims an important place in the orography of the group. It stands at the angle of the range, where the main ridge is met by the spur which connects the Disgrazia with the rest of the chain. This mighty outlier was the one object which riveted our eyes, quite eclipsing the more distant glories of the Bernina. The noble mass (scarcely three miles from us as the crow flies) rose tier above tier out of the great glacier which extended to our feet; its rocky ribs protruded sternly out of their shimmering ice-mail, and the cloud-banner which was now flung out from the crowning ridge augured no good to its assailants. Deep below lay Chiareggio and the Muretto path, so that the mountain was visible from top to bottom. For massive grandeur united with grace of form, the Disgrazia has few rivals in the Alps. Between us and the Muretto stood the fine snow-peak of the Cima di Rosso, and then the eye swept along the red cliffs which lie at the back of Piz Guz and the Fedoz Glacier to the giants of the Bernina, crowded too closely round their queen for indi-

vidual effect. In the west were the Cima del Largo, and the more distant peaks surrounding the Bondasca Glacier.

Immediately from our feet on the north broken snow-slopes fall steeply on to a wide level basin, the head of the Forno Glacier. Yawning chasms forbad a direct descent, and when we left the peak, the higher by several feet for our visit, we followed for a little distance its eastern ridge. There were a legion of enormous pitfalls, but no continuous moat, so that after some circle-sailing we were able to slide swiftly down to the snow-plain. A circular hollow formed the reservoir into which cascades of névé tumbled from the enclosing ridges. These, like the walls of an amphitheatre, stretched round from the Cima di Rosso to the Cima del Largo; to the west of Monte Sissone they became almost perpendicular, and it seems doubtful whether a more direct pass can profitably be forced in this direction. A large block of ice had detached itself from the upper séracs and now lay at their base—a bright mass of cobalt amidst the pervading greys and whites.

I have nowhere seen a more perfect 'cirque,' and we could fancy that our feet were the first which had ever penetrated it, for the Forno, though the second glacier of the Bernina group, and within an easy walk of the Maloya Inn, has never been the fashion with tourists, and no record of its earlier exploration exists.

Looking downwards a green mound close to Maloya was visible. It can scarcely be half-an-hour from the road, and must command the whole length of the glacier. Our course lay straight before us; we had nothing to do but to follow the great valley of ice. Two fine masses of secondary glacier poured in from

the eastern range, over which the Cima di Rosso rose pre-eminent, a noble peak sheeted in snow and ice. Since leaving the Pennines we had seen no such glacier scenery.

The crevasses were frequent, but generally small, —the right size for jumping over. At one place, however, it was easier to leave the ice and to pick our way through the hollow between the moraine and the mountain-side. A few sheep, which must have been driven at least a mile over the ice, were cropping the scanty herbage. The herdboy seemed simply stupefied at seeing five people drop suddenly on him from heaven knows where, and could scarcely answer our questions except with a prolonged stare.

Clouds had now risen over the sky, and a fine sleet began to fall. The mists, however, did not descend on the mountains, and looking back we enjoyed the peculiar effect of the upper peaks seen through a watery veil and lit by fitful gleams of sunshine. Having returned to the ice we followed it to the end,—a fine ice-cave, whence the Ordlegna, the stream of Val Bregaglia, rushes out in an impetuous torrent. In a few minutes we passed the Piancaning châlets and made our junction with the dull but well-established path of the Muretto Pass. An hour more brought us to the Maloya Inn and the high road; and after a pleasant stroll along the Silser-See our walk came to an end at the one picturesque village in the Upper Engadine, Sils Maria.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PEAKS AND PASSES OF VAL MASINO (*continued*).

He's a foole who basely dallies
Where each peasant mates with him;
Shall I haunt the throngèd vallies
Whilst thar's noble hils to climbe?

GEORGE WITHERS.

CHIAREGGIO—PASSO DI MELLO—PASSO DI BONDO—CIMA DEL LEDDO—VAL MASINO—PUNTA TRUBINESCA—MONTE DELLA DISGRAZIA—THE APPROACH TO BONDEO—A REPLY.

THE following year found me in company with Mr. Tuckett, at the head of the western branch of Val Malenco, the valley on the south of the central mass of the Bernina. Our original companions in a campaign, one of the most rapid and brilliant ever planned by our indefatigable leader, had gradually left us to seek the inglorious repose of England or Italy. Their place, however, had been partially filled by H. Buxton, a recruit, but not a raw one; and for guides we were amply provided with François, Peter Michel, and Walther of Pontresina.

The dingy house next the chapel serves as the inn of Chiareggio. Its sole tenant in 1865 was a universal old man, who was a sort of epitomised 'service;' cook, waiter, chambermaid, and host all in one. The resources of his establishment were limited, the cutlery was of the Bronze, and the bread of the Stone period;

Mte. della Cassandra Pico della Speranza. Passo di Mello

TRE SORELLE.

From the Bernina Group

but the kitchen produced a sort of 'soupe maigre' which sufficed, with the aid of our provisions, to ward off starvation.

Before us stretched a wide semicircle of rock and ice extending from the Muretto Pass on the north to the Monte della Disgrazia on the south. In the centre of the bay stood Monte Sissone. Above the glaciers which poured down valleywards in two principal streams, rose a continuous rock-rampart, impassable so far as we could judge to the right of Monte Sissone, and formidable everywhere. The glacier difficulties we were not afraid of; the question to be decided was whether this final wall could be scaled.

At the point where the valley forks we left the Muretto path, and turned towards the west. A bright ice-stream, having its source under the highest crest of the Disgrazia, as splendid a mountain as any in the Swiss Alps, poured down to our feet. On our right the glacier from Monte Sissone stopped short at the top of a slope of loose rubbish. We soon reached the foot of the long broken staircase. The chasms and towers on either hand were on a noble scale, but, as is often the case, it was possible to turn each in succession by a course of judicious zigzags. After threading our way through the steepest labyrinth we came to the upper region of half-formed ice, where deep continuous trenches cease, and huge icicle-fringed pits—gaping monsters easily avoided—take their place. Mounting steadily toward the Disgrazia and along the base of the rock-wall, we drew near the point of attack already selected. Here a steep snow-bed lay to a certain height against the rocks. Immediately above they were perpendicular, but across their face a ledge, slanting up-

wards, promised to give access to a part of the cliff on our left where the crags were more broken and practicable. Our pathway soon grew narrow. There was, however, only one troublesome corner, but this happened to be exactly where the meltings of an upper snow-bed poured over on us in an icy stream. The shower-bath did not cool our impatience during the moments we had to wait for one another. This corner turned, a short steep slope of snow and rock led to the crest, a pile of enormous boulders, whence on the further side we looked down on a gently sloping snow-field falling towards the Val di Mello. Over our heads towered a monstrous wall of granite, suddenly breaking off above the pass. Immense wedge-like blocks, supported only at one end, jutted out into the air like the stones of some ruined temple, ever it would seem on the point to fall, yet enduring for centuries.[1] When we set out to descend the snow-field was soon crossed, to a point where it fell away in a steep bank. We cut a few steps, and then glissaded down to a moraine. While unbuckling belts a sudden crash made us look back. A huge boulder was dancing down the slope in our footsteps, pursued by a bevy of smaller followers. The very few stones that were lying at the bottom proved this to be an unusual channel for such missiles. We were just out of range, but a delay of five minutes would have exposed us to a serious risk in a place to all appearance absolutely safe.

Our path now lay across the stony tract which encircles the small glaciers of Val di Mello until we gained the edge of the upper alp, where the collected

[1] The pass was at first named the Disgrazia Joch; but Passo di Mello, suggested by Mr. Ball, seems the most appropriate title.

streams make a deep plunge into the glen below. Here we all separated, Buxton and I descending at once with the water, and Tuckett following the proper path away to the right; Buxton luckily hit a track, and got down without difficulty, but I, less fortunate, took a course on the left side of the waterfall. Swinging myself down the steep hillside by the strong arms of the creeping pines, I was little more than 200 feet above the floor of the glen, when I was suddenly brought to a standstill by an abrupt crag. It was fortunately possible to scramble down to the lowest ledge, and then drop down the last few feet on to the elastic bed of dwarf pines below. The little bag which contained all my wardrobe was an impediment to the close union of my body and the rock which seemed expedient, and I flung it down before me. When I had more slowly followed, the bag was nowhere to be seen; half-an-hour's search was fruitless, and I began to fear lest my companions should become alarmed at my delay. I was now within 250 feet of the valley, and, seeing my way for more than half the short space, had no thought of a further difficulty. But after a few steps I found myself on the brink of a cliff, not very lofty, but still high enough to break one's neck over, and too smooth to allow any hope of a direct descent. For a moment return, which meant a circuit of two hours, seemed inevitable. But a careful study of the rocks on my left showed a sort of slanting groove or gallery running across their face, of which it might be possible to take advantage.

In order to reach this loophole of escape a crag of awkwardly smooth surface had to be crossed, and it was clearly desirable to use every natural means of adhesion. I dropped my ice-axe, and the force with which

it rebounded from its first contact with the ground, gave its owner a serious warning to follow in some less abrupt manner. Foothold soon failed, but not before I was within reach of the groove, or flaw in the cliff-structure, just mentioned. How best to profit by its advantages was now the question. Wedging myself into it as far as might be, I pressed with my back and elbows against the lower rock, and with my hands against the overhanging upper lip. My knees and heels formed a second point of support, and by retaining one part of my body always fixed I wormed myself along slowly, but with perfect security. At last the smooth cliff was turned, and it was easy to descend into the glen.

A copious spring burst out of the rocks just where I first touched level ground. I quenched at it the intense thirst produced by the excitement of the solitary climb, picked up my axe, and then hastened onwards, desirous as soon as possible to rejoin my companions, and relieve whatever anxiety they might feel on my behalf. A needless exertion, for on approaching the châlets of La Rasica I saw a cluster of grey forms prostrate in various attitudes on the turf, while a pile of emptied bowls beside them showed the nature of the beverage by which the Circe of the châlet had wrapt them in forgetfulness.

Beyond La Rasica I was treading in my last year's footsteps. Val di Mello, the name by which the eastern head of Val Masino is distinguished, is one of the most savage mountain recesses in this part of the Alps. The highest peaks of the district do not themselves rise immediately out of it, but their granite buttresses are so bold that grandeur is the last element the scenery could be accused of wanting. It does, to me at least,

want something, and on contrasting it with two other valleys of similar formation the missing element is easily recognisable. Utter wildness fails to satisfy, and savage crags lose half their beauty when they no longer tower above grassy lawns and out of rich woods of pine, or better still, of glossy chestnuts. Val Bondasca, the Val di Genova under the Presanella, and Val Bavona may be taken as good examples of granite scenery in its highest perfection.

We found but little change in the Bagni and their visitors. The doctor and the priest were still playing bowls, the bell was still ringing, and the same waiter was ready to do for us exactly the same things as he had done ten months before. By his aid we succeeded in repeating a good dinner, and, much more remarkable, an early start.

Our object this year was to effect if possible the traditional pass from the Porcellizza Alp to Val Bondasca, which we had missed at the first attempt.

The stream which flows before the door of the bath-house rushes down the cliff a few yards higher up in a noble fall. A steep zigzag of well-made pavé, better to mount than descend, climbs beside the water. Two hours of steady uphill work lead to a grassy basin, in the centre of which stand the châlets of the Porcellizza Alp. A ring of granite peaks hems in the pasturage, and ice fills the gaps between them. The summits themselves are precipitous, but the ground below them is less broken, and the slopes are gentler and greener, than at the head of the other glens in this group. Hence cows take the place of Bergamasque sheep, and the châlet, known as the Alp Mazza, is one of the largest in the neighbourhood.

We fancied our pass must lie at the eastern foot of the Punta Trubinesca. The glacier was smooth and solid, and we had no difficulty in reaching the gap at its head. But the descent on the other side was far from eligible. We found ourselves at the top of an ice-slope at least 1,000 feet high, very steep, and swept by constant discharges of stones. We naturally resolved to look further along the ridge. Turning our backs on the still unconquered and formidable cliffs of the Trubinesca, we at once climbed the snow-slope on our right, and, crossing a rocky spur, gained the head of the glacier adjacent to the one by which we had ascended. Again we inspected the northern slopes, but with like result. The Bondasca Glacier still lay far—very far—below, at the base of a most repulsive gully, down which stones rattled constantly at a pace likely soon to put a stop to all trespassing on their private pathway. Unwilling to face such a cannonade, we again right-faced. It was fortunately possible, and that without much difficulty, to follow the crest of the chain by keeping a little below it on its southern side. In time we reached the spur dividing the second from yet another ice-stream, the largest and most easterly of those that descend towards the Porcellizza Alp. We saw with disgust that we had yet some distance to go, and that over very rough ground, involving a considerable descent, and the passage of a steep ridge, to reach the Passo di Ferro, the point where we had crossed the previous year.

Suddenly Peter Michel, who had unlinked himself, and was exploring above, shouted to us to follow, and in a few minutes we were all standing in a natural doorway in the ridge, some twenty feet deep by five

in breadth. The ice of the Bondasca Glacier was here only 250 feet below us, and the cliff looked broken enough to be practicable, so, the guides being in favour of an immediate descent rather than a long and uncertain circuit, we decided we had reached our pass, and behaved accordingly—that is, made ourselves comfortable in niches and enjoyed the view and iced Asti, a beverage which can only be appreciated at over 10,000 feet. While we were roroping, Michel grew oracular, and to a question on the easiness of our route, replied in a formula we had learnt by experience to dread as much as Cleopatra the 'but yet' of the messenger from Antony—'Es geht,—aber.'

The descent of a partially ice-coated cliff is one of the most ticklish parts of a climber's work. But so long as there is any good hold on rock, and the party can proceed directly downwards, there is no danger if the rope is properly used. When it becomes necessary to move diagonally across the face of the mountain the difficulty is much increased, and the rope is not so easily kept taut. Yet there are few places where with sufficient care a slip of any one man may not be checked before it becomes a fall.

In the present instance it was some time before we met with anything to justify Michel's reservation. But about half-way down the rib which had helped us came to an end, and the rocks grew smooth and mixed with ice. To have descended in a straight line would have brought us to the edge of a gaping crevasse; we tended, therefore, continually to the right, where the glacier rose higher against the cliff, and snow bridged the obstructive chasm. Here a long step down, there a

longer straddle round was required, and our progress became of the slowest, as prudence often required a majority of the party to be stationary.

After passing one very obnoxious corner, which each pulled himself round, partly by an imperceptible grasp on an invisible handhold, but principally trusting to the support of the rope, we got on easier ground, and, by cutting a few steps, reached at last (in two hours from the pass) the snow-bridged moat. Once on the ice, François was aided by old experience, and steered us through the labyrinth of the Bondasca Glacier without either delay or difficulty.

After leaving the ice we followed the steep path which leads down amongst the creeping pines and underwood on the right side of the valley, to the lower level of Val Bondasca.

Another plunge, this time through chestnuts, brought us to the maize-fields and vine-trellised villages of Val Bregaglia. Neither at Promontogno nor Castasegna was any carriage to be obtained. In order to arrive at Chiavenna we were compelled, ice-axes in hand, to storm the roof of a diligence, where, intrenched among the luggage, we formed a garrison far too formidable for any guard or postillion to dislodge.

In the summer of 1866 I again found myself with my friend Tucker and François Devouassoud, in eastern Switzerland. The passes of Val Masino were accomplished, but its peaks still remained maiden and unassailed. Having added Fluri to our party, we started one afternoon from Pontresina for the old hospice on the top of the Maloya, then a humble inn, now a familiar house of call for the fashionable society of St. Moritz.

The Cima del Largo, the highest peak in the range between Val Bregaglia and Val Masino, was our aim for the morrow. I spare the reader the long and somewhat tedious march over familiar ground to the head of the Forno Glacier. We had started under a cloudless sky, but before we reached the foot of the Largo no 'Cima' was to be seen, only snow-slopes stretching up into the mists. Fortunately we already knew how to attack our peak. From the N. or E. the Cima del Largo presents itself as a bold round tower rising sheerly above the wall on which it stands. As far as its northern base there could, we believed, be little difficulty. Our expectations were fulfilled: steep snow-banks and easy rocks lifted us to the rim of the snowy basin of the Forno. The ridge which divides it from the Albigna Glacier is a narrow comb of granite; we moved along it in the chink between the rocks and snow. A wall of ice suddenly loomed before us through the mist. We had reached the foot of the tower, and the trial of strength was about to begin. The ice was very hard and the slope very steep, and steps seemed to take a long time. At last a patch of rock was gained. We now followed a ridge, sometimes rock, sometimes ice; steps had still to be cut, and we progressed but slowly. Suddenly our leader said, 'C'est assez,' reversed his axe, and stepped out freely for a few paces. We were on the snow-dome which forms the summit of the Cima del Largo.

View there was none; we could see we were on the top, and that was all. But even in the worst of weather the newness of his plaything offers some consolation to the childlike simplicity of the true climber. Comforting ourselves, like Touchstone, with the reflection that the

Largo, if, under the circumstances, but 'a poor virgin, an ill-favoured thing,' was at least 'our own,' we adjourned to a sheltered niche in the rocks a few feet below the summit. The atmosphere was tolerably warm and windless, and in our bivouac under the overhanging eaves of the great rocks we were sheltered from the soft, thickly-falling veil of snow which cut us off from the lower world.

If our surroundings might have seemed cheerless, our feelings were by no means so. I never assisted at a more festive meal than that which celebrated the birth of our stoneman.

Fluri was determined to do his best to compensate for the want of view; he was in his highest spirits, pleased with the mountain, the food, the wine-bag, the 'herrschaft,' and last, but not least, with himself. Now Fluri, whether in good or bad spirits, used in any case to be careful to let you know his mental condition. On this occasion he exploded in a series of small but elaborate jokes. First he got into a hole and played marmot. Then he scrambled after a solitary ranunculus (which, strange to say, was blooming at this great height), and pretended not to be able to get back again, wriggling his body absurdly over the easiest rock in the neighbourhood. Nearly an hour must have thus passed, and yet no break in the mist offered to reward us for revisiting the summit. So about 1 P.M. we set out to return. The descent of the ice-wall called for considerable care, as it was necessary to be prepared for a slip, although such an accident might not be very likely to happen. François, who was leading, had to clear out the fresh-fallen snow from our old steps, which were quite effaced. Here Fluri, who in his early period,

before he had learnt snowcraft from English mountaineers and foreign guides, showed a morbid dislike to the commonest and most necessary precautions, raised himself greatly in our esteem. Though screaming and howling every variety of jödel the whole time, I never saw him once without the rope taut and his axe firmly anchored in the ice. The rest of the descent was easy enough, and it does not take long to get down snow-slopes. From the foot of the peak we had a long and heavy walk back to the inn on the Maloya. The snow on the glacier was soft and ridgy, and the path beyond sloppy and slippery, and the light snow-flakes changed into heavy rain when we got down again into the lower world. At Maloya we found the car ordered from Silvaplana to meet us. Our day's journey was yet far from its end. There was much still before us that would be wearisome to relate, and was still more wearisome to endure.

How the postmaster at Silvaplana tried to impose on us, how we relaced our sodden boots and tramped through the rain to St. Moritz, how there Badrutt gave us a car which carried us moist and sleepy to Zutz, this is not the place to tell. Enough that we arrived at Zutz in a state of depression which even the scene of revelry by night offered by the 'Schweizerbund,' where we found Swiss warriors absorbed in the task of conducting village maidens through the solemn revolutions of a national variation of the waltz, failed to cheer. It was the last of our trials that no inducement would persuade a Swiss maiden to make our beds.

In the same summer we visited for the third time the Bagni del Masino. We were forced by weather to enter the valley by its proper gate instead of by one

of the irregular but more tempting modes of access open to mountaineers.

For the first hour the car-road between the Val Tellina and the Baths runs through a steep and narrow defile. It is not until the village of Cattaeggio, picturesquely imbedded amongst rocks and foliage, and the mouth of Val Sasso Bisolo have been passed, that the valley opens, and the jagged range near the Passo di Ferro comes into sight. Before reaching San Martino the stupendous boulder, known to the peasants as the Sasso di Remeno, is encountered. On near approach it quite maintains its reputation as the largest fallen block in the Alps. Beside the monster lie several more boulders of extraordinary size. On the top of one of them is a kitchen garden approached by a ladder. The snows melt sooner on such an exposed plot, and the goats cannot get at the vegetables.

The object of our return to so recently visited a region was to complete in peaks the work we had already carried out in passes. The problem which on the whole we looked to with most interest was now immediately before us. Mr. Ball had pronounced the Punta Trubinasca, the highest peak west of the Cima del Largo, and the prince of the rocky summits overlooking Val Bondasca, absolutely inaccessible from this side. But from what we had seen the previous year we were inclined to believe that the prophet had for once spoken hastily. The rocks on the southern face of the peak (both south and west faces overlook the Porcellizza Alp) had then seemed to us difficult certainly, but not impossible.

We arrived in good time at the Baths, and soon went to bed, determined to be prepared for the very early start which should give us a fair chance of suc-

cess in our venture. My disgust may be imagined, therefore, when I awoke next morning to see the sun already shining brightly in at my window, and my watch conspicuously pointing to 6 A.M. What had become of François? Had our guide for the first time in his life fallen a victim to the potent wines of the Val Tellina, or, more unlikely still, deliberately arranged to shirk the formidable Trubinesca?

I hurried at once to seek the defaulter, who was found in a deep slumber, which he justified by the statement that it had rained at 3 A.M. It is difficult to remedy a bad beginning, and our old friend the nocturnal waiter was now of course in his first sleep. Breakfast was not over until past seven, at which unseemly hour we set out with comparatively slender hopes of success. For three hours we followed our old tracks of the Passo di Bondo. As we mounted the green hillsides above the Porcellizza Alp a new plan was suggested—to try the western instead of the southern face of the Trubinesca. This we had never examined, because it was the side seen and pronounced against by Mr. Ball from the Pizzo Porcellizzo.

A smooth cliff some 200 feet high ran round the entire base of the peak, and there was no breach visible. But there was still one spot which we could not clearly see, the head of the glacier we were about to tread. As we mounted the easy banks of ice the secret of the mountain was suddenly revealed. A snow-gully of very moderate slope led up to the ridge between our peak and the Cima di Tschingel. In half-an-hour more the cliff was outflanked, and we were on the crest of the chain looking down an awful precipice into Val Bondasca.

The final ridge alone remained. It rose beside us in a broad slab of granite. But a convenient crack destroyed the difficulty suggested by a first glance. We were now at the foot of the turret so clearly seen from St. Moritz; we turned it by its southern side, and then with our hands in our pockets walked quietly up a broad terrace of mingled rock and snow. The neighbouring peaks had already sunk below us—a smooth shining surface shone between them. One of us exclaimed 'Voilà Como.' François replied, 'Voici le sommet.' It was just midday. Four hours and a half had disposed of the terrible Trubinesca, and added one more to the very lengthy list of Alpine impostors.

The distant panorama was marred by clouds; in its main features it must be a repetition of the lovely western view gained from every high summit of the Bernina group. It is the near prospect, however, which distinguishes the Punta Trubinesca. It can show two sights not to be seen, perhaps, from any other snowy peak, a large portion of Lago di Como, that coyest of Alpine lakes, and what is still more remarkable, the whole course, I may say literally every inch, of both sides of an Alpine carriage-road—Italy and Switzerland in the same glance.

At our very feet lay the forests and villages of Val Bregaglia, Italian chestnuts and white campaniles: amongst them we caught sight of the thin streak of the high-road, which we followed as it climbed corkscrew-fashion above the woods and waterfalls and up to the bleak wind-swept down of the Maloya. Then our eyes accompanied it past the pine-fringed lakes of Sils and Silvaplana, and up again to the bracing heights of St. Moritz, every house in which was distinguishable

through the glasses. Lost sight of for a few miles beneath the dip to Samaden, the road reappeared together with a companion thread, the river Inn, and both finally vanished from our view somewhere between Zutz and Zernetz.

The Baths were regained without adventure. And thus this maiden peak, although capable of deceiving the most experienced judges, yielded without a struggle to the first assault. Its reputation has survived its fall, and I saw it lately catalogued in some foreign publication as 'non ancora scalato.'

The very fact, however, which makes my story short and dull, the surprising easiness of the peak, gives it the greater interest for the ordinary traveller. If some of the native hunters will be at the trouble of making themselves familiar with the route, there is no reason whatever why the ascent should not become a frequent excursion from the Baths. The walk is even within the powers of many ladies, and they might ride to within at most three hours of the top. Any one who can appreciate quality as well as quantity in a panorama will be well repaid; those who do not should confine themselves to Piz Languard.

Our descent had been delayed by the state of my friend's knee, which had been suffering from an old sprain, and now refused plainly to do duty for some days to come. It was vexatious enough, for on the next night we were to have slept out for the Disgrazia. But necessity knows nothing of plans, and he resigned himself to return as he had come to Sondrio, while I resolved to make a push for the same place over the mountains, and if possible to climb the Disgrazia by the way.

Soon after midnight François and I set out under a cloudy sky, which gave no sure token as to the day to follow. The now well-known path up Val di Mello was quickly traversed. As we reached La Rasica thin rain began to fall, and François, prophesying evil, suggested a return to San Martino. But the first gleams of day showed the thinness of the clouds, and our faces were again set against the steep hillside which leads to the upper pasturages. Before these were reached the blue face of heaven was everywhere breaking through the mist-veil, and a fine day was assured. Our spirits, hitherto gloomy, rose rapidly. The Passo di Mello was soon left below on the left, and we pressed rapidly up the steep glacier which fills the corner under the Pico della Speranza.[1] The last bank up to the spur dividing us from Val Sasso Bisolo was steep enough to need step-cutting; but we succeeded in avoiding altogether the difficulty described by Mr. Kennedy.[2] We walked across an ordinary snow-slope on to the crest of the Disgrazia at a point somewhat to the south of the lowest gap between the loftier mountain and the Pico della Speranza. My hopes now ran high. The rocks were singularly easy until we came to a broad ice-trough. Steps were cut across this; then we climbed up a steeper rock-rib and over a tooth. Beyond this we came to a second and wider sheet of hard black ice falling away steeply towards the Sasso Bisolo Glacier.

[1] So named by Messrs. Stephen and Kennedy, who apparently considered the gloominess of the surrounding names required some relief. The Monte della Disgrazia is supported on the other side by the Monte della Cassandra.

[2] Judging from the map appended to Mr. Kennedy's paper in the first vol. of the *Alpine Journal*, he crossed the spur at a much lower point than we did.

François at once set to work cutting steps; when thirty-two had been cut, and three-quarters of an hour had elapsed, we were less than halfway across the ice. All this time a very strong wind was blowing over the ridge; still the steps were good, and the position an ordinary one to mountaineers. It did not even occur to me to feel doubt as to our final success until François turned round for the first time and remarked on the violence of the wind. A few steps further a second observation showed me that my guide entertained doubts in his own mind as to the prudence of persevering in our attempt.

I replied, however, that I was quite happy, and that the steps were excellent. A few more were cut, and then came a third suggestion of retreat. For once in my life I acted on principle, and I have regretted it ever since. François' doubts were not to be wondered at when the moral strain of his unusual position is considered, alone with a 'monsieur' on a cathedral roof of ice. My old friend has a great deal too much imagination to be merely animally brave, and like all the best guides feels acutely the responsibility of his situation. He knew that if I made a false step he might not be able to hold me. This was a good reason for our retreat. He could not feel, as I did, that I had not the slightest disposition to slip; for indeed his work was so good that no one accustomed to ice-steps could possibly have fallen out of the foothold provided.

We decided, therefore, with a sharp pang to give up the peak, which was about half-an-hour distant, and looked ten minutes.

Despite my defeat, I cannot pretend that the Disgrazia is in any way a difficult mountain for any pro-

perly constituted party of mountaineers. I have not as yet revenged myself on the peak, but François some years afterwards took two of my friends to the top, and has given me his report. The slope, which we found hard black ice, was then snow, and was very soon disposed of. Twenty minutes more of rough scrambling brought them to the lower tooth reached by Herr Syber-Gysi. The gap between this and the highest peak cost another ten minutes of stiff, but not in the least dangerous, rock climbing. They started from the lower châlets in Val Sasso Bisolo and took six hours in the ascent. I was eight hours (halts included) from the Baths to where I stopped. It is clear, therefore, that active walkers are under no necessity to sleep out for this mountain, but may do it in the day between two comfortable beds. The reputation of difficulty which the Disgrazia has certainly acquired is due partly to its splendid appearance from the Bernina group, still more to the interested exertions of the Pontresina guides, who have not been ashamed to charge the peak in their tariff at 170 francs; 70, as they explain, for the four days' journey, 100 for the dangers of the climb. Now that Italians from Sondrio and hunters of Val Maleneo have found their way up together, it is scarcely likely that any traveller in his senses will seek the services of the gentlemen of the Engadine.

The superb view spread out before us might well have diverted our minds even under a more serious disappointment. It was one of the days, frequent in the Alps after unsettled weather, when the air has a brilliancy and transparency so extraordinary that an Englishman rather fancies himself in another planet than within a day or two's journey of his own misty

island. It is difficult to believe that you, who now breathe under an enormous arch of sky rising from pillars four hundred miles apart, are the same being whose vision was bounded but last week by a smoke-canopy resting on the chimney-pots of the other side of the square, and who, in home walks, was rather proud of distinguishing a landmark twenty miles off.

Two vertical miles below lay the broad Val Tellina with its towns and fields, nearer was the bare trench of Val Sasso Bisolo; between the two a broad-backed ridge, covered with green pasturage, seemed to offer a delightful path for anyone descending towards Morbegno.

The higher crest cut off only an insignificant portion of the Bergamasque hills. Beyond the nearer ranges, beyond the tossing hill waves of Como and the wide plain, the long level line of the Apennine melted into the glowing sky. The Disgrazia shares the advantage of all the outstanding Italian Alps, of being well within the great semicircle formed by the chain, instead of like the summits of the Bernese Oberland on its outer ring. From Dauphiné to the Bernina every peak was in sight, the whole array of the central Alps raised their silver spears through the inconceivably pure air.

From the foot of the ridge we turned to the left down the broad Sasso Bisolo Glacier, descending caverned slopes the concealed treachery of which was, in truth, far more dangerous than the open terrors of the upper crest. Two climbers may safely attack many peaks, but it is undoubtedly wrong for so small a party to venture on any snow-covered glacier. By *wrong* in matters of mountain-climbing I mean anything which excludes the element of skill in that noble sport, and

tends to convert it into mere gambling with hidden forms of death such as the ice-pit or the avalanche. Immediately under the face of the peak we struck the base of the high rocky spur which runs out from it to the south-west. A steep scramble (twenty minutes) brought us to a gap, where we rested awhile to admire the exquisite view of the Zermatt range.[1] On the further side we slid down a hard snow-bed which had very nearly succeeded in developing itself into a glacier, and found ourselves in a desolate hollow, the stream of which forces a way out into Val Torreggio, one of the lower branches of Val Malenco.

The descent lies at first through a narrow funnel between richly-coloured cliffs. The granite has now come to an end, and sharp edges of slate and serpentine crop up against it. A green and level upland valley soon opens before the eyes, watered by an abundance of sparkling fountains which spring up beneath every stone. Here a path gradually asserts itself and leads to a group of châlets. The descent into the depths of Val Malenco is long, but pleasant. Although the high peaks of the Bernina are concealed by lower spurs, the way abounds in charming vignettes of wood and water and warm hillsides.

At Torre we had to wait some time for the carriage sent up to meet us from Sondrio. As we sat by the wayside the village priest joined us. When he learnt that we had come straight over the mountains from the 'Bagni' his astonishment knew no bounds, and he seemed to doubt whether we were not something more or less than natural and wingless human beings.

[1] This gap is probably the Passo della Preda Rossa of an Italian party who in 1874 ascended the Disgrazia from the Alp Rali in Val Torreggio.

Our evening drive was swift and exciting. An impetuous horse whirled us down a steep vine-clad hill, rounding the zigzags at a pace which made perils by mountains sink into insignificance compared to the perils by road. Near a beautiful waterfall tumbling from the opposite hills, the Malero was leapt by a bold arch, and for some time we ran along a terrace, high above the strong glacier torrent.

From the last brow overlooking the Val Tellina the eye rests on one of those wonderful landscapes which tell the southward-bound traveller that he has reached his goal and is at last in Italy.

The great barrier is crossed, and the North is all behind us. The face of the earth, nay the very nature of the air, has changed, colours have a new depth, shadows a new sharpness. From the deep-green carpet of the smooth valley to the crowns of the sunset-flushed hills, all is wealth and luxuriance. No more pines stand stiff in regimental ranks to resist the assaults of winter and rough weather. No mountain rhododendrons collect all their strength in a few tough short shoots, and push themselves forward like hardy skirmishers of the vegetable world into the very abode of snow. Here the 'green things of the earth' are all at home and at peace, not as in some high Graubunden valley waging unequal war in an enemy's country. The beeches cluster in friendly companies on the hills. The chestnut-forest rejoicing in a green old age spreads out into the kindly air broad, glossy branches, the vines toss their long arms here and there in sheer exuberance of life. Even on the roadside wall the lizards run in and out amongst beds of cyclamen and tenderest ferns and mosses. The hills seem to stand back and leave room for the sunshine; and

the broad, shining town of Sondrio, girt by towers and villas, wears, after the poor hamlets of the mountains, a stately air, as if humanity too shared in the general well-being.

It is one of the peculiar privileges of the Alpine traveller to enjoy, if he pleases, the choicest luxury of travel, a descent into Italy, half-a-dozen times in the space of one short summer holiday.

We drove down through vineyards and past a large villa and church, and through a narrow Via Garibaldi into a Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele. The south side of the square was formed by the hotel, an imposing building which contains within its walls the post and diligence offices. The windows command a view up Val Malenco, terminated by the twin peaks of the Schwestern, which appear from this side as two rocky teeth, hardly to be recognised as the pure snow-cones which look in at every window at Pontresina.

I have now, I hope, given an account of the mountains of Val Masino, which, though far from complete, may suffice to aid mountaineers who wish to visit them, and to direct attention to some of the most enjoyable expeditions within their limits. But, as I put aside the various pamphlets from which I have tried to add to my own information on this group, I notice that a worthy Herr Professor has remarked on the first ascent of the Disgrazia, that it was 'wholly devoid of scientific interest and results.' I fancy my learned friend preparing to lay down this holiday chronicle with a similar shrug of the shoulders: and I feel indisposed to allow him his criticism until he has first submitted it to be examined in detail, and listened to what may be urged on the other side.

'The Alps,' that shrug seems to say, 'are not a playground for idle boys, but a store-room full of puzzles; and it is only on the understanding that you will set to work to dissect one of these that you can be allowed to enter. You have free leave to look on them, according to your taste, as an herbarium, or as a geological, or even an entomological museum, but they must be treated, and treated only, as a laboratory. The belief that the noblest use of mountains is to serve as a refectory at once mental and physical for an overworked generation, that—

> Men in these crags a medicine find
> To stem corruption of the mind,

is a poetical delusion unworthy of the philosopher who penned the lines. You must not come here to climb for mere health, or to indulge a sensual love of the beautiful, or, still worse, that brutelike physical energy which may be more harmlessly exhausted in persecuting foxes or trampling turnips. Μηδεὶς ἀγεωμέτρητος εἰσίτω. Come with a measuring rod or not at all.'

So far our critic. In his anxiety to claim on behalf of science exclusive dominion over the mountains, he forgets that all great works of nature are not only monuments of past changes but also living influences. The physical history of our globe is a study the importance of which no one at the present day is likely to disallow. Because we refuse to look on mountains simply as so much historical evidence, we of the Alpine Club do not by any means, as has been frequently suggested, range ourselves amongst the Philistines. We listen with the greatest interest to the men of genius whose mission it is to interpret the hieroglyphics of the temple in which we only worship. But we do not all

of us recognise it as our duty to try to imitate their researches. Nor would the wiser of them wish for imitation from an incompetent herd of dabblers, who, however much they might gratify individual vanity, would advance the general sum of knowledge about as much as an ordinary amateur sketchbook does art.

Is it always better for a man, when acres of red rhododendron are in full bloom around him, and the insects are filling the air with a delicious murmur, to be engrossed body and soul in poking about for some rare plant or impaling an unfortunate beetle? When two hundred miles of mountain and plain, lake and river, cornland and forest, are spread out before the eyes, ought one to be remembering that 'justification' depends on ascertaining whether the back is resting on granite or feldspathic gneiss?

The preposterous pretension that no one is 'justified' (it is the favourite word) in drinking in mountain glory in its highest forms unless he brings as a passport a profession of research, cannot be too strongly denounced. To require from every Alpine climber some show of a scientific object would be to preoccupy men's minds at the moment when they should, and would otherwise, be most open to enlarging influences; it would in many cases be to throw away moral advantages and to encourage egotism, vanity, and humbug.

An obvious comparison may perhaps render more clear the relative positions of the simple lover of the Alps and the scientific dabbler. Rome is almost as universal a goal of modern travel as Switzerland. There also is a great history to be studied, on many of the problems of which investigation of the ground we tread may throw light.

The world listens with eager attention to anyone who has the requisite training to study such problems with profit, who can tell us what rude remains may be of the time of the Kings, can distinguish between the work of the Republic and the Empire. And amongst the galleries we are glad to meet those who can trace the progress of art and analyse a great picture so as to show the elements drawn from earlier masters which have been crowned and immortalised by the genius of Raphael or Michael Angelo.

But who ever ventured to assert that Rome was the peculiar heritage of the archæologist or the art critic? that the pathetic strength of its world-centring ruins or the glorious beauty of its frescoed palaces was reserved for the few who can explain, or make guesses at, how these things grow, and forbidden to the many who can only appreciate their present charm?

The Alps, we hold, like Rome, are for everyone who has a soul capable of enjoying them. They have been given us by right of birth for the recreation of our minds and bodies, and we refuse to hand over the key of our playground or to accept the tickets of admission which are so condescendingly offered. If anybody—even if a scientific body—calls after us as we pass along the mountain-path, we shall return no other answer than the very sufficient one made under similar circumstances by the hero of Mr. Longfellow's popular ballad. And if, like that unhappy young man, we are doomed to perish in our attempt, I do not fancy our last moments will be seriously embittered by the absence of such consolations as a barometer or a spirit-level might have afforded.

CHAPTER V.

EAST OF THE BERNINA.

TARASP AND THE LIVIGNO DISTRICT.

——— Comest thou
To see strange forests and new snows
And tread uplifted land? EMERSON.

THE PRÄTIGAU—VERSTANKLA THOR—TARASP—PIZ PISOC—PASSO DEL DIAVEL—LIVIGNO—MONTE ZEMBRANCA—PASSO DI DOSDÈ—VAL GROSINA.

In the last two chapters I have sketched a route from the highway of traffic and tourists—the Rhine valley—to the Italian Alps, passing to the west of the crowded roads which lead to the Upper Engadine. My design now is to point out a similar track lying to the east both of the Julier and the Albula, which by means of variations may be made equally available either for the foot or carriage traveller.

Our starting-point is the station of Landquart, some miles beyond Ragatz and short of Chur, and opposite the opening of the long, deep Prätigau.

Above the gorge which secludes this side valley from the Rheinthal a car-track mounts to Seewis, an upland village with 'Pensions,' frequented in summer by Swiss guests, whence the ascent of the Scesa Plana, an isolated block commanding a wide panorama, and

enclosing in its recesses a large mountain lake—the Luner See—is often made.

This frontier valley rivals as a specimen of Swiss pastoral scenery the more famous spots in Canton Bern. Its villages, surrounded by fat, wide-spreading meadows of the brightest green, and overshadowed by noble walnuts, wear on the outside an air of long peace and prosperity. The interiors do not contradict the first impression. In the wayside inns one finds rich brown panelled walls decorated here and there with armorial bearings, old mirrors and carved presses. Mountainous stoves tower in peak form to the ceiling, and are cased in tiles, each of which represents some Scripture scene in a style often remarkable both for vigour and humour.

After twenty-four miles of tolerably continuous ascent the road reaches the upper expanse of the Prätigau and the scattered hamlets of Klosters. The scenery is of a character more common in Tyrol than Switzerland. Although it does not awe by sublimity or enchant by richness and variety, it is yet thoroughly Alpine.

Behind a foreground of level meadows and green but bold hillsides the glaciers and snow-peaks shine modestly but invitingly in the distance. They are not, as in the Bernese Oberland, magnificently rampant intruders on the pasturages, but quiet, stream-nursing benefactors, whose acquaintance is never forced on you, and must be sought out with some trouble.

Consequently the charm of such valleys is a self-contained peacefulness; and a troop of cows rather than a herd of chamois represents the animal life in harmony with their sentiment.

At the bridge of Klosters, in 1866, my companion deserted me for England. François and I wanted to turn south again to the Engadine, and we determined to take a glance by the way at the retiring beauties of the Silvretta Ferner. This considerable glacier group, scarcely known to Englishmen, runs parallel to the Lower Engadine, separating that valley from the Tyrolese Montafun and Paznaun Thal, and abutting at its western end against the head of the Prätigau. The Swiss Alpine Club made it one year the scene of their summer excursion, and have conquered most of its peaks and passes. At their instigation a hut has been built four and a half hours from Klosters, close to the glaciers, and there we intended to pass the night.

A new inn and pension was just opened on the left bank of the stream, and I did not long remain without society in the salon. First appeared an invalid from the Baths of Serneus, who speedily broke down my German by preferring to talk of war-politics rather than of mountains. Next came a gentleman from Chur bound for Davos, who puzzled me still more by launching into what he gave me to understand was English. Last of all the local guide turned up, armed with testimonials from the Swiss Alpine Club, and aghast at the notion of any traveller crossing the glaciers without his aid. Finding the native willing to accompany us on very moderate terms, and being one too few for a glacier pass, we readily agreed to take him.

Above Klosters the path is level for some distance, and leads through thick woods rich in ferns and flowers. After passing the mouth of the Vereina Thal the forest grew thinner and we reached the châlets of the Sardasca Alp, standing at the true head of the valley on a level

meadow where several streams poured down to form the Landquart. A steep hillside was now climbed by sharp zigzags; then, a stream and track leading to an easy pass into the Fermont Thal having been left, the path wound along the hillside until it met the water flowing from the great Silvretta Glacier.

A short distance higher a pole was conspicuously fixed on a large boulder, and a few yards further back we found the hut in a sheltered hollow scarcely 300 yards from the end of the glacier. It was sufficiently large and proof against wind and rain, as we had afterwards good reason to know; but the furniture was scanty and in bad repair. Two benches and a hay-bed were all we found, and there was no stove.

However, this did not matter much for the night. But before we went to sleep the wind had begun to howl, and next morning when we opened the door a great, white gust rushed in, and all without was a seething mist alive with snow-flakes.

Unless we decided to return, there was nothing for it but to make our provisions hold out by submitting to an orthodox 'Vendredi Maigre,' and to amuse ourselves as best we could by toasting cheese and carving wood. Fortunately an inkbottle was discovered which materially alleviated our position. I have heard under similar circumstances of a chess-board being constructed by means of a lead pencil, and the game played with pieces of black bread and cheese appropriately carved; but two are required for this diversion.

About midday we made a hopeless and rather feeble 'sortie,' which the snow-storm speedily repulsed. Two peasants who had brought up wood for the hut paid us

a visit in the course of the day, and a stray cow-boy dropped in later for an afternoon call.

To our great delight Saturday, though still cloudy, promised better weather, and we left our prison at 5 A.M. and soon reached the broad ridge of rocks separating the Silvretta and Verstankla Glaciers. It was not our intention to cross the Silvretta Pass, but to find a shorter way to the Engadine through the gap at the head of the Verstankla Glacier, and to descend by the Tiatscha ice-fall[1] into Val Lavinuoz—a course which we did not believe to have been previously taken.

Substitute the Cimes Blanches for the Silvretta Pass, the short cut from Zermatt to Breuil near the Matterhorn for the pass we aimed at, and the Val d' Aosta for the Lower Engadine, and anyone who knows the Zermatt district will understand the relation of the two routes. Only of course the lateral glens of the Lower Engadine are much shorter than the side valleys of Val d' Aosta.

The Verstankla Glacier lies lower than the Silvretta, and to avoid a descent we kept on the spur between them to the point where it was buried by an ice-cascade overflowing from the larger to the smaller flood. We crossed the fall diagonally, and found ourselves in an upper basin of snow, and close to a narrow gap between the splendid crags of the Schwarzhorn and the far lower Gletscherkammhorn. This was our Pass, the Verstankla Thor, already christened but not crossed by Swiss climbers. The view was limited, but wonderfully snowy; on every side stretched broad, white glaciers and dark

[1] According to Herr Ziegler's map of the Lower Engadine, the principal glacier of Val Lavinuoz is the Vadret Chama, and the Vadret Tiatscha is a tributary ice-stream flowing into it from the west. On the Federal map the Verstankla Glacier is marked Winterthäli.

snow-powdered rocks, and on the south Piz Linard stood up, a bold, isolated pyramid against the blue sky.

We soon reached the spot where the glacier first plunges towards Val Lavinuoz in an ice-fall which in 1865 had turned back Herr Weilenmann, one of the best climbers in the Swiss Club. It made an attempt, at least, to frighten us. We had not reached the open crevasses when François, who was leading, suddenly disappeared like a sprite in a pantomime. There was no great shock given to the rope, but a considerable one to the feelings of the Klosters guide. François had lighted on a ledge, and after popping up his head for a moment to reassure us, withdrew it again down the trapdoor to look for the pipe which had been knocked out of his mouth by the fall. The treasure recovered, our leader was helped out of his hole and we went on. An incident like this, trivial as it is in fact and in telling, is so only because the rope is used, and properly used: had we been unattached, or walking too near one another, the consequences might easily have been very different. If any Alpine novice wishes to learn how to have and to describe moments of 'intensivsten Schrecken' he may turn to Herr Weilenmann's 'Aus der Firnenwelt,' and read how, on almost the same spot, the Swiss climber, walking with the rope in his hand instead of round his waist, nearly lost his life.

We found a fairly easy way through some fine snow-castles and ice-labyrinths to the rocks on the eastern side of the fall. The cliffs close to the glacier are precipitous, but a commodious ledge leads round to some beds of avalanche snow, down which it is easy to glissade. The lower glacier is smooth, and below its end

we had a very pleasant walk down Val Lavinuoz, with views of the noble mass of Piz Linard immediately overhead. The glen soon opened, at Lavin, on the high-road of the Lower Engadine, which we reached in 4½ hours' walking from the hut—so that our short cut is not liable to the charge, usually brought against Alpine short cuts, of being considerably longer than the ordinary road.

Lavin, in 1869, suffered the usual fate of Engadine villages, by being burnt to the ground. It is consequently a new hamlet, with substantial, stone-built cottages and broad expanses of whitewash. In their passion for whiteness and cleanness, fresh paint and bright flowers, and, I may add, in a certain slow persistency of character, the eastern Swiss seem to me the Dutch of the mountains. The neighbourhood of Piz Linard makes Lavin a desirable resting-place for climbers. Horses can be taken for three hours in the ascent, and a path has, I believe, been made up to the last rocks.[1] This taller rival of Piz Languard deserves more attention from strangers than it has yet received.

But the ordinary tourist will hasten on until he reaches the great bathing-place of the Lower Engadine, which, if it has not yet equalled St. Moritz in popularity, is only behindhand because in the present generation there are more Hamlets than Falstaffs, more nervous and excitable than fat natures, and consequently a greater call for iron than for saline waters.

The Baths of Tarasp are so named from the commune in which they are situated. Between Tarasp and

[1] The information is somewhat contradictory. Tschudi speaks of a 'new path;' a writer in the last year's publications of the German Alpine Club talks of the climb as decidedly difficult.

Schuls, on the verge of Switzerland and within a few miles of the Austrian frontier at Martinsbruck, a number of mineral springs issue from the ground on both sides of the Inn. Their properties are various, but the most in repute with patients are of a strongly saline character. Of late years a large bath-house—the largest in Switzerland, as advertisements continually inform us—has been built near to the principal sources.

The first disease on the long list prepared by the local doctor of those likely to be benefited by a course of the waters is 'general fattiness.' Hither, accordingly, from the farthest parts of Germany, and even from Spain and Denmark, repair a crowd of patients to seek relief from the bonds of the corpulency to which nature or their own appetites have condemned them.

In short, if St. Moritz is, as Mr. Stephen thinks, the limbo of Switzerland set apart for the world—that is, for kings, millionaires and people who travel with couriers—Tarasp is its purgatory, providentially created for the class whom the flesh has rendered unfit for such Alpine paradises as Grindelwald, or even Pontresina.

The bath-house, planted as it is beside the river at the bottom of a steep-sided trench, in a position very like a deep railway cutting, is never, I think, likely to become a favourite resort of mountaineers. It is difficult even to feel mountain enthusiasm in an establishment tenanted chiefly by invalids or Italians whose walks are limited to the extent of their own bowl's throw. The social atmosphere of the place is, as might be expected, utterly unalpine. The use of guides is unknown, as excursions are habitually undertaken in carriages and have villages for their object; riding-horses for ladies are a rare luxury, and their owners attempt to bargain

that they shall never be taken off the car-roads of the valley.

It is only fair, however, to say that travellers need not stay at the Baths. They have the choice of two neighbouring villages, at both of which inns have sprung up of late years. Neither of these situations, however, struck me as attractive. Schuls, on the left bank of the Inn, lies on a bare hillside at a considerable distance from the commencement of all the pleasantest walks; while the pensions at Vulpera, although better placed for excursions, look straight on to the dreary slopes behind Schuls, a prospect to which eyes accustomed to other Alpine scenery will scarcely reconcile themselves.

The neighbourhood of Tarasp is not, however, so wholly ugly as appears probable to the traveller who arrives at the bath-house by the high-road. The slopes on the northern side of the valley remain, it is true, from whatever point they are seen, amongst the most naked and featureless in the Alps, and the knobs which crown the lower spurs of the Silvretta Ferner can only by an extreme stretch of courtesy be called peaks. But the natural features of the country on the opposite bank of the Inn are far bolder and more varied. There the ground rises above the river in a succession of wooded banks and grassy terraces, cut by the deep ravines of torrents issuing from wild lateral glens. Copses of birch and fragrant pine-woods afford shelter to a host of rare ferns and wild flowers, while the sides of the path are garlanded with dog-roses blooming with a profusion and brilliancy peculiar to the spot.

On the lowest and broadest of the meadow-shelves or terraces stands the hamlet and castle of Tarasp; the

latter a whitewashed building perched on a rocky knoll, and mirrored in a shallow tarn. Seen from a certain distance, it forms a picturesque element in the foreground. From this point, where an hotel ought to be built, a charming forest-path follows the right bank of the Inn to Steinhaus, and numerous sledge-tracks, commanding fine views of the stern limestone peaks which encircle the entrance to the Scarl Thal, lead to upper shelves of the mountain.

The Piz Pisoc, Piz St. Jon, and Piz Lischanna, are in their own way really fine objects, challenging, of course, no comparison with the snow-clad giants of the Upper Engadine, but rather recalling to mind some of the wilder and least beautiful portions of the Venetian Alps.

Piz Lischanna is easy of ascent, and nourishes a glacier oddly described in 'Bradshaw' as 'the finest of the higher glaciers of Switzerland.' It is in fact a broad ice-lake which rests sluggishly on its uplifted limestone platform, and, finding sufficient difficulty to maintain existence where it is, has not energy enough to make a push for the valley. A slight increase of temperature—say to the climate of Primiero—would melt its masses and lay bare the rocky bed.

Piz Pisoc, the highest of the group, enjoyed for long a local reputation for inaccessibility, until, in 1865, Fluri took the trouble to come down from Pontresina, and, untroubled with any impediment in the way of 'herrschaft,' but with for companion a young native of Schuls, who has since left the country, planted a flag on the summit. This is not the only first ascent that has been made by Pontresina men on their own account: two of them repeated the unusual proceeding

afterwards on Piz d' Aela near Bergun. One ought to be glad, I suppose, to see such evidence of a genuine love of sport in a class sometimes represented as the unwilling victims of foreign gold. But to the Alpine clubman such conduct looks a little like the gamekeeper turning poacher, and selecting moreover the moment when his employer's game is nearly exhausted to go out by himself and shoot off the few remaining pheasants. And the mountaineer recollects further as an aggravation of the offence that maiden peaks cannot like pheasants be bred in the farmyard or sent down by the morning express from town. Fortunately for the Engadiners they are not subject to the jurisdiction of a bench of climbing county magistrates. From their own countrymen they have nothing to fear. Swiss 'Klubists' do not seem to find the point or interest of a 'first' ascent seriously diminished by the fact that their guides have made it beforehand; and as the guides of Pontresina have never got on particularly well with our countrymen they are quite right, perhaps, even from a professional point of view, in their practice.

Fluri furnished some details of his ascent for Herr Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer;' and, I presume, it was on the same authority that in the new Grisons guide-tariff the mountain is described as 'schwierig,' and taxed at 30 francs a guide. No one had followed the two Engadiners until, in 1870, I climbed the peak in company with François Devouassoud. Our experiences, both as to the length and difficulty of the expedition, differed considerably from those of our predecessors, who probably did not hit off the best way. The following directions will, I think, be found useful by future climbers:—Turn off the road leading from Vulpera to

Schloss Tarasp by a cart-track, mounting steeply at first, and then traversing meadows to the entrance of Val Zuort. At the corner take the higher of two paths, following a watercourse until it reaches the stream. Cross and ascend by an ill-marked track, which soon fails, and leaves you to find your own way through rhododendron bushes and over stony slopes beside the rocky barrier closing the glen. Climb the bank of snow above the barrier to the level of the Zuort Glacier. A large snow-filled cleft now opens among the rocks on the left, offering an unexpectedly easy means of surmounting the lower cliffs of Piz Pisoc. Ascend this gully for some distance, until, above a slight bend in its direction a recess is seen on the left, with a small bed of snow in it divided from the great snow-slope by a bank of shale.

This spot is the gate of the mountain. A short sharp scramble places one on the rocks above the small snow-bed, and there is no further difficulty in climbing straight up them towards the gap at the northern base of the final peak. A few yards only before reaching it, turn sharply to the right, and, by keeping below the ridge and choosing with some care the easiest spots at which to pass a succession of low cliffs, the summit will soon be gained. The blindness and intricacy of the route form the only difficulty. If the right course is hit off, there is no hard climbing on the mountain, but the general steepness and abominably loose nature of its stony slopes render mountaineering experience or a good guide essential.

Of the panorama as a whole I saw, and therefore can say, nothing. The near view has a strong character of its own. The cornfields and white villages of the

Engadine enhance by contrast the savage effect of the wild limestone crags and gloomy glens which surround the peak on every side but the north. The drop from our feet on to the path which threads the defile of the Scarl Thal was absolutely terrific, and the precipices did not appear less tremendous when I looked up at them afterwards from their base.

The return to Tarasp may probably be varied without difficulty by turning to the left at the foot of the great gully, and crossing by the gap at the head of Val Zuort into a branch of the Scarl Thal. That valley well repays a visit. There will be found scenery the very reverse of the pastoral landscapes of the Prätigau. If the former is a country for cows, this is the very home for bears, and some of the 'ill-favoured rough things' do in fact still find shelter among the dense thickets of creeping pine which cover every patch of level ground. Not that there are many such patches. The first part of the Scarl Thal is a gorge of the most savage wildness; and if the lower walls are not so unbrokenly perpendicular as in some other Alpine defiles, there are probably few valleys where the peaks on either side stand at so short a distance apart. The face of Piz Pisoc in particular is built up as a whole at an angle of appalling steepness.[1] The path through the gorge is called by courtesy a car-road, but it is barely possible, and not very safe, to drive along it.

From Tarasp to Zernetz is but a short morning's

[1] The summits of Piz Pisoc and Piz St. Jon are, as the crow flies, 2,250 mètres apart; the bottom of the Scarl Thal is 1,000 mètres, or about 3,400 ft. below them. The average of the slopes on both sides the valley would be 45°.

drive through the pleasantest portion of the Swiss Inn valley. The latter village, situated at the junction of the Ofen road with that leading to the Upper Engadine, is the best starting-point for the next stage in our journey.

The country immediately east of the Bernina is an unknown land. Its mountains are worse mapped and less accurately measured than those of many much more remote Alpine districts. To a certain extent it deserves the ordinary fate of mediocrities placed by the side of greatness. Val Livigno and the surrounding glens cannot rival the Bernina or the Orteler. Yet the foot-traveller taking this country on his way southwards discovers much to reward him. He meets with green bowls of pasture cut off from the outer world by miles of pathless defile, wild rock recesses crowded with chamois and famous for bears, dolomitic crags and snowy peaks streaming with glaciers, which, planted in the Pyrenees, would have had long ago an European reputation, further east in Tyrol at least a monograph apiece.

Yet I must repeat that in comparison with most of the ranges here spoken of these mountains are mediocre. Val Masino is pre-eminent for rugged grandeur. Val Maggia blends perfectly strength and grace. Pinzolo contrasts them. The Brenta group, with its horns and pinnacles shooting up above secluded dells, reminds us of fantastic romance, of goblin castles, and woodland fays.

Livigno has at most a quiet charm; the wilder recesses of its mountains are singular and savage rather than noble and majestic. The country suffers scenically from the defect of all the source-valleys of the Inn; its mountains have never been dug out to their foundations,

their lower limbs, like those of some half-wrought statue, are still buried out of view.

The ranges between the Bernina and Buffalora roads on the east and west, the Engadine and Val Tellina on the north and south, are, roughly speaking, disposed in three parallel chains, separated by the troughs of Val Viola and Val Livigno. The northernmost of the three ridges is steep-sided and rugged, and the gorge broken through it by the Spöl inaccessible except by circuitous and uneven paths, which render it equal in length and fatigue to the neighbouring passes. The central chain, although the Alpine watershed, sending down on one side waters which ultimately join those of Elbruz in the Black Sea, on the other streams which feed the Adda and the Adriatic, is easy of passage. Hence Livigno has from early times been united to Bormio instead of to the Engadine, and since the surrender of Savoy to France remains the only piece of ground north of the Alps owned by Italy, with one insignificant though interesting exception.[1] The southernmost of the three ridges, that which divides Val Viola from the lower lateral valleys of the Val Tellina, is the loftiest.

It bears on its northern slopes a considerable quantity of snow and ice, and in the Cima di Piazza (11,713 feet) rises into a snow-dome, which but for the immediate neighbourhood of the Ortler group would have before this attracted the attention of English climbers.

Such local traffic as there is through this secluded region follows well-marked lines. It passes along the

[1] One of the sources of the Rhine is in Italy. The pastur ages of Val di Lei, a lateral glen of the Averserthal, are pastured by Italian shepherds, and included within the Italian frontier.

Livigno valley and over the easy gaps at its head to the Bernina Hatüser, or La Rosa; by the trench of the two Val Violas from La Rosa to Bormio; or from Zutz to Bormio, crossing the northern and central ridges by the Casana and the Passo di Foscagno. Those routes have been described in guide-books or by earlier writers.[1] But, as is often the case amongst second-rate peaks and in districts where the main valleys are more or less commonplace, the byways open to a climber are far more interesting than the ordinary traveller is led to expect.

In 1866 I struck out a new way from Zernetz to the Val Tellina, which in three days' very easy walking showed us a great variety of scenery. In the absence outside the Swiss frontier of any trustworthy map, we were very much in the dark as to the best course. Our route therefore is capable of improvement, and I do not fear that anyone in want of a day or two's training will complain of having been persuaded to take this country on his way to the Lombard Alps.

A considerable mass of dolomite crops out in the range which separates the parallel troughs of the Upper Engadine and Val Livigno. The head of Val Cluoza, which opens close to Zernetz, is entirely surrounded by dolomite ridges. This valley, besides being recommended in German guide-books to 'passionate mountain-tourists and friends of characteristically wild Alp scenery,' has the attraction of being one of the few recesses of the Alps where bears are 'at home,' even if they will not always show themselves to visitors, and where chamois can still be seen in herds. When therefore in the summer of 1866 I carried out, in company with my friend Mr. Douglas Walker, an old plan of

[1] See *The Grisons*, by Mrs. H. Freshfield. Longmans & Co.

striking straight across the Livigno district, we naturally decided to pass through Val Cluoza, and make a way across the mountains at its head in the course of our first day's march. At Zernetz we put up, by Jenni's advice, at an inn kept by a certain Filli, well known in the Lower Engadine as a great bear-hunter. The rooms were decorated with highly-coloured sporting pictures, presented to our host by various German and Austrian archdukes whom he had initiated into the mystery of his craft. But the most striking ornament of the house was a specimen of the natives of the wild country we were bent on exploring, in the shape of a huge stuffed bear, six feet high, who, standing up on his hind legs in one corner of the salle-à-manger, threatened us with an hitherto undreamt-of Alpine danger on the morrow.

Our host the bear-slayer was of course consulted on our plans, into which he entered warmly, entertaining no doubt of their being practicable, although he assured us that no Zernetz hunter had ever taken the route we had planned. Being himself unwell, he procured us a strong youth, who knew the footpath up the lower part of Val Cluoza, to act as porter.

The next morning broke grey and showery, and we delayed our start until nearly 7 A.M., when we filed off across the meadows behind the village. The Ofen road is left, and the Spöl crossed by a covered bridge, about half a mile from Zernetz. From this point a cart-track leads up, first amongst underwood, then through a pine-forest, to a brow overlooking the narrow wooded gorge by which the stream of Val Cluoza finds a way into the Spöl. The path through this ravine is a mere hunter's track, overgrown by creeping pines, and almost de-

stroyed in places by torrents and earthslips. As it winds round the frequent gullies, at a great height above the foaming torrent, the views are very striking, whether the eye dips down into the ravine or rests on the opposite mountain side—a mass of broken crag and wood. Close to the stump of an old fir-tree, scored with numerous initials and dates, carved by the hunters of the neighbourhood, the first view of the inner valley is obtained. We saw before us a green glen covered by primeval forests, and destitute of any signs of human habitation. The rugged crags and scanty glacier of Piz Quatervals, the highest crest of this range, rose at its head.

A screen of fir-logs was here raised across the track; this, we were informed by our porter, was a hunter's lair, the situation of which was determined by some herb, esteemed a special delicacy by Bruin, growing close by, and often attracting him to the neighbourhood. About two hours' walking from Zernetz, the path returns to the level of the torrent, and recrosses to its left bank. After roaming on for half an hour through fir-woods, where the trees seemed to decay and fall unheeded, and the moss and lichens hung in long streamers from the boughs, we crossed a small stream flowing from the glacier of Piz Quatervals. Just beyond it we found a hunter's hut, a snug little den built of pine-logs, with the interstices stuffed with moss, and fitted inside with shelves and a bed. The clean solitary cabin, so unlike the usual populous and filthy chalet, the dense pine-woods, the bold bare peaks around, and, above all, the romantic flavour imparted to the whole by the possibility of bears, gave an unusual zest to our midday meal. From this point a

mountaineer, not wishing to cross to Livigno, can ascend Piz Quatervals, and descend through Val Trupchum, one of the lateral valleys of the Engadine, to Scanfs or Zutz.[1]

Beyond the hut all definite path ceases. The character of the scenery remains the same as far as the bifurcation, where Val Cluoza splits into two utterly desolate glens, forcibly and appropriately named the Valley of Rocks and the Valley of the Devil. The latter probably offers the shortest way to Livigno; it seems also the wildest and most striking of the two valleys. After the mouth of the Val del Sasso has been passed, the Val del Diavel assumes a savage sublimity in accordance with its name. Huge dolomitic cliffs—not so fantastically broken as this rock often is, but stained with the strangest colours—close in on all sides. In the bottom of the glen vegetation entirely ceases, and the stream itself disappears, buried even in September under the snow avalanches, which, falling in spring from the impending crags, lie unmelted through the summer in these sunless depths. Their hard consolidated surface affords an agreeable path, and enables the explorer to avoid the rough boulders and advance rapidly towards the barrier of mingled rock and snow which closes the view. We had here an encounter with seventeen chamois, who were feeding above us, until, disturbed by our shouts, they scampered off among the wild crags which separated us from Val del Sasso. Only once, in the Graians, had I seen a larger

[1] I ascended Piz Quatervals some years later from Val Tantermozza, a glen opening above Zernitz, and returned to the Engadine by the way indicated above. The head of Val Trupchum is very wild, but the walk as a whole is disappointing.

herd; but a meeting with small families of three or four is to the climber a matter of daily occurrence. How far chamois are from being 'nearly extinct,' as newspaper-writers and tourists are apt to believe, may be judged from the following fact. An old man of the name of J. Kung, who died last year at Scanfs, was reported amongst his neighbours to have shot, besides eleven bears and nine great eagles, 1,500 chamois. The larger figure may not be strictly accurate, but its local acceptance bears sufficient witness to the abundance of game which could alone render it credible. The eleven bears I see no reason whatever to doubt. There is no lack of evidence of the presence of these animals, and many stories are current about their depredations. In the year of our visit the following anecdote went the round of the Swiss press:—

A boy living at an alp close to the Passo di Verva came upon a bear in the act of devouring one of his sheep. The young shepherd fell at once upon the animal with his staff, but the bear was quite ready for a round, and our David soon began to get the worst of it. When he ran away the bear came after him. Pressed hard the boy leaped one of the narrow clefts which the streams of this district often burrow through. The pursuer blundered into the chasm and was found dead at the bottom.

Jenni, in getting out his telescope to inspect the herd, had laid down his umbrella, an implement of enormous size and splendid colouring. The Gamp was somehow forgotten, and, unless it has been discovered by some fortunate hunter, probably remains to this day as a monument of our passage. Down the rocky barrier already referred to the stream from a glacier on the

nameless summit marked 3,127 mètres on Dufour's map pours in a waterfall. Mounting beside it we found ourselves on the level of an elevated table-land, surrounded by rugged peaks, and resembling, but on a much smaller scale, the interior of the horseshoe of Primiero. At its further extremity was the low ridge in which our pass lay. Advancing over beds of shale and snow, we soon came to the foot of a small glacier, which we crossed, making for the lowest portion of the ridge on the north-west of a tooth of rock which jutted out conspicuously from its centre. A steep bank of snow had to be climbed; this surmounted, our work was done, and we were looking away to the west over the wild ranges which enclose Val Livigno. Deep below us lay the head of Val Viera, ending in an amphitheatre of rock. The descent into it was evidently steep. We found a way at first down shale gullies; then came cliffs, much broken and presenting no serious difficulty, although anyone who missed the right spot to take them might easily get into trouble. Once beside the stream, we followed it closely through the remains of avalanches. Val Viera soon bent abruptly amidst the wildest rock scenery we had lately seen. Quaint red and grey pinnacles of every variety of form rose above; pale, lemon-coloured cliffs, stained by weather and spotted by the dark mouths of caves, shut in the view, while, looking backward, the ridges from which we had descended towered precipitously overhead. We were constantly arrested by the fantastic and perpetually shifting character of the landscape.

At a second bend in the valley, where it turns back sharply to the east, the path makes some ascent; but we encountered no difficulty, and found

some amusement in following the stream through a miniature gorge, jumping from bank to bank as occasion required. When the crags retired a little, the path rejoined us, and we met first some cows, then an old woman gathering sticks, who was either dumb or rendered speechless by fright at our sudden appearance. Travellers at Livigno at all are few and far between; and as no human being had probably ever entered the valley by our route, the old crone might well see in us a party of gnomes descending from their rock castles on some errand of mischief.

When the picturesque ravine came suddenly to an end, we emerged without any descent on to the broad meadows of Val Livigno, and, turning a corner, saw the whole of its upper and inhabited portion before us.

The landscape had a distinctive and unusual character. The wide expanse of the valley, its pervading greenness, the scanty fringe of forest, clothing only the lowest hillsides, the glimpses of snow close at hand suggested Norway rather than Italy. Yet nature, if no lavish, seems a kindly friend to the peasantry of Livigno. No rude torrent tears up their elastic turf, no avalanche-track scars the smooth hillsides, no overshadowing mountain raises its bulk between the Diogeneses of the valley and their sunshine. Behind the walls of dolomite which shut them out from the nineteenth century, they spend in their remote tub a quiet and patriarchal existence, of which the news that a mad dog has been seen in a neighbouring valley is the greatest excitement. The total population of the valley is said only to amount to 600 souls. The figure seems small considering the number of houses which dot the broad

meadows. But the difficulty is explained when we find that each Liviguo farmer shifts his residence two or three times a year according as the crops call for his attention. Half-an-hour's stroll over the softest and smoothest of turf, on which all the croquet clubs in England might find room to practise, brought us to the 'osteria' near the central of the three churches, and just beyond the stream issuing from Val Federia.

Even in its inn Livigno is conservative; that is, averse through habit to all improvements not forced on it from without. The external pressure appears here to be small; at any rate, the cottage which receives strangers is the same now as it was twelve years ago. No daring innovator, fired by the success of the next valley, has tapped a mineral spring or borrowed money to build a guest-house. Nor have the inhabitants as yet succeeded in grasping even the existence of the mountaineering spirit, much less the profits to be gained from it. When we announced our intention of crossing to Val Viola by the head of Val Tressenda, the boy who had engaged to carry our provisions at once demurred to having any part in so perilous an undertaking. He was heartily supported by the patriarchs of the valley, who had gathered to watch our preparations, and now quavered forth a chorus of which 'vedretta' and 'impossibile' formed the refrain. At its conclusion the youth's father stepped forward, and in a solo recitative, illustrated by appropriate gestures, forbad his son to peril his precious life, no matter what the 'signori' might offer for his services. The difficulty was only arranged by our giving a solemn pledge that the boy should not be in any way tempted to enter on the horrible 'vedretta.' On this understanding the

parent consented to dismiss him with his blessing and a huge baker's basket in which to stow away our small stock of eatables.

As it turned out, we were not tempted to break our promise, for grass and stone slopes lasted up to the gap we meant to cross. Four hours after leaving the village we had planted our ice-axes in the snow-crest of Monte Zembrasca, one of the highest summits of the range dividing Val Livigno from Val Viola. From this mountain, despite its moderate height—it is several hundred feet lower than Piz Languard—we enjoyed a view more picturesque if less panoramic than the prospect from that now famous belvedere. The peaks on the opposite side of Val Viola surprised us by their fine forms and glaciers. The Cima di Piazza stood up boldly as their leader, a noble mountain which almost persuaded us to change our plans and rush off at once to its assault. West of the green gap of the Passo di Verva rose a cluster of peaks about the head of the Dosdè Glacier, and further distant we recognised the sharp heads of the Teo and Sena, the former crowned by a stonemann of my own building. The whole mass of the Ortler group, from the long zigzags of the Stelvio road to the Gavia, was in sight. In the centre the black, stumpy point of Monte Confinale was conspicuously thrown out against the white snows of the Forno Glacier. Below us lay the two Val Violas separated by broad, rolling pasturages.

The Swiss valley, or Val Viola Poschiavina, had just been the scene of the one active exploit by virtue of which the Swiss forces could claim to have taken part in the campaign of 1866. I tell the story as it was told me.

Irregular troops were fighting on the Stelvio, and

there seemed a prospect of the Italians, if worsted, flying for refuge towards Poschiavo. To prevent any violation of Swiss neutrality a considerable force was stationed in the Engadine. Its head-quarters were at Samaden. The large dining-room of the Engadiner Hof was just completed, and it occurred to the inhabitants to celebrate the event by a banquet to their brave officers. But scarcely had everyone sat down when a scout entered with the, at the moment, particularly unpleasant news that a Garibaldian force was advancing from Bormio. There was no help for the officers: they had to saddle and away, taking with them their men, at the greatest speed country carts could carry them.

La Rosa was fortunately reached before the invaders, but the force had scarcely been carefully disposed so as to command the path, when the enemy was caught sight of in the distance. Soon the glitter of steel and the glow of red shirts could be distinguished through the field-glasses: then for a few minutes the advancing band was hidden behind a knoll. When it emerged again there was wrath among the officers and mirth among the men. The supposed bayonets were short scythes, the Garibaldians a party of Italian hay-cutters coming over on their annual visit to the Engadine.

We spent the night near the head of the Val Viola Bormina, in the principal châlet of the Dosdè Alp, a building of unusual size, and boasting a staircase with an upper storey. The 'padrone' of the establishment, a well-to-do native of Bormio, who lived for pleasure on his alp during the summer months, volunteered to accompany us in our attempt to find a direct passage over the Dosdè Glacier into Val Grosina, a neglected

but, in size at least, important side-glen of the Val Tellina.

Favoured by a cold morning and hard snow, we reached in little more than two hours the crest close to a little rock-turret conspicuous from our night-quarters. At our feet lay Val Vermolera, one of the heads of Val Grosina, a cheerful expanse of bright green woods and pastures dotted with countless chálets.

Here we left the 'padrone,' greatly satisfied at having acquired a knowledge of what lay behind the horizon of his daily life. Ambition pushed us up to the nearest snow-top on our right, where we were disappointed to find ourselves overlooked by a loftier summit to the west, probably the Corno di Lago Spalmo of the Lombard map. It was separated from us by a deep gap, offering a fine pass to the head of Val Vermolera, which, on the south side, would lead over a glacier unmarked in any map. The summit we had climbed is nameless, and I shall not venture to anticipate the carefully-weighed decision of the painstaking German, who will some day set himself to map and name the peaks, passes, and glaciers of this remote corner.[1]

We soon slid down again to the gap at the eastern base of the turret. A steep rock-wall cut us off from a snow-filled hollow. The difficulty, such as it was, was soon over, and the rest of the descent was only a trial for weak knees. A long hillside like that of the Monte Moro was below us; the whole drop from the pass to the valley must be over 4,000 feet, and the distance is very small. For some time we followed a stream, some-

[1] Herr Ziegler's map of S.E. Switzerland includes this country. The scale is large, and the execution beautiful, but the corrections introduced on the very inaccurate Lombard map are but slight.

times sliding down a snow-bed, sometimes stumbling over rocky slopes. On the pasturages we found a track leading eastwards and downwards. As we drew near the level of the valley the scenery became very picturesque. On our right the river of Val Vermolera fell over a rocky shelf in a fine fall. A few yards beyond a stone bridge over a charmingly-wooded ravine we found a shady nook, tempting to a long hour's siesta. It was very warm when we again set forward, but the path was excellent and the valley delightful. After a time, however, the woods came to an end, and we found ourselves amidst shadeless hay-meadows. The way now grew stonier and hotter, and the scenery somewhat monotonous. We were glad to reach a brow, whence we looked down on the Val Tellina. A steep paved zigzag led us through chestnut woods, past a dirty village, then through more chestnuts, fields of Indian corn and vines, all overshadowed by the stern ruins of a mediæval fortress. At last it fell into the straight, white Stelvio road, midway between two campaniles which closed either vista. A few minutes later we entered the shade of Grossotto, a little town gay with new paint and Italian red, white and green, and blessed, at least in our recollections, as the possessor of ripe fruit and Asti at a franc a bottle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BERGAMASQUE MOUNTAINS.

Up, where the lofty citadel
Overlooks the surging landscape's swell;
Let not unto the stones the day
Her land and sea, her lily and rose display. EMERSON.

VAL S'ERINO—THE GARDENA—INTRODUZIO—FORCELLA DI CERVENO—VAL TRISTA—AS OLIA TRAVERSETTE—VAL BREMBANA—BRANZI—PASSO DI GORNIGO—SECCO—VAL SERIANA—ROVERETTO—MONTE GLENO—VAL SELVINO.

The sharpest form of pain has in all ages been imagined under the figure of a man with the object of his most eager desire ever dangling before his eyes but out of reach. If—may the omen be void!—any of the Alpine Club should in another world ever realise the punishment of Tantalus or Dives, they will probably be placed opposite a peak cut off from them by some impassable gulf.

Such threatened to be our fate as, with the natural gloominess of three o'clock in the morning, we strapped up our humble bags in the marble halls of the Hotel Vittoria at Menaggio under the indignant and contemptuous survey of an awakened porter.

When we issued into the night the luminous Italian stars flamed out of a perfect vault, blotted only at the edges by the dim shapes of the mountains. The keen northern breeze which intruded on the languid scent-

laden air of the lake was the best promise of a day of unclouded sunshine. Yet this breeze was the cause of all our fears; under its influence the lake was stirred into waves which broke noisily against the terraced shore. Our goal was the Grigna, and between us and Varenna lay three miles of dancing water. There was no steamer for hours; and it is no rare thing for the passage to be impossible for small boats. Doubtful and depressed, we hurried round to the little port.

It was a happy moment when a cry answered our shouts, and the boat, ordered overnight, shot up with its four rowers through the darkness. We were soon on board and out of sight of François, left to search for a missing portmanteau in the custom-house of Como.[1]

The shelter of the land was soon left, and our broad-bottomed boat, keeping her head to the wind, as if making for Colico, began to do battle with the waves, which knocked her from side to side like an unwieldy cork. We were anxious as to the behaviour of our rowers. The boatmen of the lake are not all to be trusted. The year before I had seen a Colico crew give way to the most abject terror at the mere approach of a storm-cloud which turned out to be quite empty of wind. For ten minutes before the rain burst on us they did nothing but alternately catch crabs, and curse and kick the crab-catcher. The Menaggio men showed themselves, however, of very different metal. They

[1] Travellers often forget that all locked luggage coming from Switzerland is stopped at the Italian custom-house. In the present instance the portmanteau had been directed Perlezza, in ignorance that, by an absurd postal law, which it is worth while to call notice to, everything is sent from Lugano to Perlezza viâ Como!

rowed hard and talked little, and the stern-oar, standing up to his work like the rest, gondolier-fashion, steered with so much skill in avoiding the wave-crests that, knocked about as we were, we only shipped one sea during the passage.

The mountain-forms were growing less ghostly, and the first pale gleams across the sky were reflected still more faintly on the surface of the lake as we ran ashore on the beach at Varenna. The little town was still asleep under its cypresses, but a light gleamed from the windows of a waterside inn, which soon furnished us with coffee and an omelette.

A few hundred yards north of Varenna the glen of Esino, through which lies the way to the Grigna, opens on the lake. The 'Alpine Guide' describes a path leading past the castle and along the (true) left bank of the stream. But the more frequented track, a steep pavé between vineyards and villages, starts from the bridge of the Stelvio road and mounts the further hillside.

In the old visitors' book at the Montanvert Inn was to be read a characteristic entry, 'found the path up, like that to heaven, steep and stony.' Mr. Spurgeon would find Esino much more difficult to get to than heaven. The path is laid with large smooth rounded stones, placed at such a high angle as to render back-sliding inevitable. Fortunately there was abundant consolation in the exquisite glimpses which met us at every corner, and boots and tempers held out pretty well, until both were rewarded by a smooth terrace-path circling round the hollows of the upper hills.

Where the deep ravine rose towards us, and two steeply-falling brooks united to form its torrent, the

church of Esino stood forth, the ornament of a bold green spur projecting from a broad platform covered with fields and trees.

Half the village lies a few hundred yards higher on the hillside, and the only inn—a mere peasant's house of call—is the first house in the upper hamlet. The blacksmith appeared to be the official guide to the Grigna, but in his absence a substitute was provided in the master of the inn. His first act was to pack an enormous basket of bread and wine, of which he said we might consume as much as we liked and pay him accordingly, a primitive but not, as we afterwards found, particularly economical arrangement. His next proceeding was to offer a few coppers to a girl to carry the basket to the last shepherd's hut. In the Bergamasque country we soon became accustomed to our porters acting as contractors and subletting a portion of their contract to any chance passenger or herdsman they met on the way.

A charming path leads up from Esino to the Cainallo Pass, the direct way into Val Sassina. Large beeches grow in clusters amongst tufts of underwood, or overshadow shallow ponds, the frequent haunts of the herd. Below lies the long ribbon of the lake, its waves reduced to a ripple, which the sloping sunlight hardly makes visible. Away beyond the green gulf leading to Porlezza and the hills of Maggiore glows the supreme glory of the Alps, the snow-front of Monte Rosa. Right and left the faint and far forms of the Grand Paradis and Grivola and the Oberland peaks attend in the train of their queen.

Instead of crossing the pass the route to the Grigna turns southward along the ridge until some 500 feet

higher it reaches the edge of a great horseshoe-shaped recess in the north-east flank of the mountain. The limestone here breaks below into many fantastic spires, the precipices opposite are abrupt, and the whole landscape has a severe and bold character unexpected in this region.

The circuit to the opposite side of the recess where the real climb begins is somewhat tedious. Beyond a cattle-alp, which affords milk, the mountain becomes a bare mass of limestone, the hollows in which are filled, first by grass, then by snow. The top lies still far back, and the ridge on the right which cuts off most of the view looks tempting. It is not comfortable ground, however, except for a tolerable cragsman. Keep below to the last, and when you clamber on to the highest crest your patience will be rewarded.

A moment before a rock was before your eyes, now there is nothing but the straight-drawn line of the Tuscan Apennine. The vast plain of Lombardy has, for the first time all day, burst into sight. Surely there are few sights which appeal at once to the senses and imagination with so much power. Possibly the Indian plains from some Himalayan spur may have richer colours, certainly the northern steppe from Elbruz has greater boundlessness. But they are not so much mixed up with associations. This is Italy; there are Milan, Monza, Bergamo, a hundred battle-fields from the Trebia to Magenta.

It is natural to compare the Grigna panorama with those from Monte Generoso and Monte San Primo. As a perfect view of the Lake of Como the Monte San Primo is unrivalled. The delicious dip from Monte Generoso on to Lugano perhaps surpasses in beauty the

wilder plunge of the Grigna upon the Lago di Lecco. But for the plain and the great range I unhesitatingly give the palm to the higher mountain.

The last spurs of the Alps are here singularly picturesque. The bold forms of the Corno di Canzo and Monte Baro break down to display the shining pools of the Laghi di Pusiano and d' Annone, and the hills and towns of the Brianza, a fair garden country full of well-to-do towns and bright villas, the country seats of the Milanese. Hither Leonardo may have come, and looking across the narrow lake or from beside some smaller pool or stream at the stiff upright rocks of the Grigna and the Resegone, have conceived the strange backgrounds with which we are all familiar.

From mountains of middle height the general aspect of the range is ordinarily one of wild disorder. It is but rarely any distant group is completely seen; only, wherever the nearer ridges subside, one or two peaks come into view disconnectedly and as it were by chance. From more commanding summits the contrary effect is produced; intervening and minor masses sink into their proper place; they no longer produce the impression of a hopeless labyrinth, but combine with the great peaks to form well-defined groups.

In most Alpine districts the Grigna (7,909 feet) would rank among minor heights; on the shores of Lago di Como and at the edge of the Lombard plain it is a giant. Its extra 2,000 feet enable it to look not only over neighbouring hills but into the hollows which separate them—hollows filled with an air like a melted jewel in its mingled depth and transparency of colour. The snowy Alps, raised now, not merely head, but head

and shoulders above the crowd, range themselves before the eyes in well-ordered companies.

In one direction only—where the intricate Bergamasque mountains scarcely leave space for some disconnected glimpses of the Orteler snows or the bold front of the Carè Alto—is the panorama interfered with in the ordinary manner.

Perfect peace and radiance filled the heaven. The morning breeze had died away, no cloud had lifted itself from the valleys; all was calm and sunny, from the lake at our feet to the pale shadowy cone scarcely defined on the glowing horizon, which was Monte Viso. For hours we lay wrapt in the divine air, now watching Monte Rosa as it changed from a golden light to a shadow, now gazing over the plain as the slant sunbeams falling on white walls and towers gave detail and reality to the dreamlike vision of noon.

The two peaks of the Great and Little Grigna or Campione are cut off from the surrounding ranges by a deep semicircular trough extending from Lecco to Bellano. Near the centre of the bow stands Introbbio on the Bellano side of a low watershed. The easiest way down the back of the Grigna seems to be to follow its north-east ridge, and then descend a steep grassy hillside to some homesteads grouped about a pond.

The lower slopes are a charming surprise to eyes accustomed to the severer scenery of a Swiss alp. They share the beauties of the pasturages of Bern and add to them something of a softer grace. Although, owing to the porous nature of the limestone, water is scarce enough to make it worth while to collect it in circular ponds like those of our own South Downs, the ground,

even in September, is covered with a close carpet of the greenest turf, broken, not by rocks, but copses of laburnum. In May it must be a garden of the exquisite wild flowers which climb, a fairy procession, in endless variety of form and colour and perfume, every southern hillside.[1] In the place of brown chalets we have whitewashed cottages roofed with red tiles, which harmonise well with the general cheerful brightness of the landscape. A steep track through a thick chestnut wood leads down to Pasturo, a large village whence there is a good road to Introbbio.

Pasturo lies in a broad and smiling basin, the head of Val Sassina. But half a mile further on the opposite ranges are almost joined by two huge masses of porphyry, between which the stream finds a way through a narrow and once fortified natural gate. Beyond the barrier lies Introbbio half hidden amongst its chestnuts, and looking across to the bold crags of the precipitous face of the Grigna.

There are few things less favourable to Stoicism than disappointed hopes in an inn. Where nothing is expected much can be borne. But of the 'Albergo delle Miniere' the guide-books encouraged the most rosy anticipations, and the appearance of the house bore out at first sight its good name. It stood, as all inns should, outside the town and the first house as we approached it; on the wall was written in bold letters 'Grand Hotel of the Mines.' The front door stood hospitably open, and closed shutters are too usual in sunny Italy to excite misgiving. But it was in vain we searched the empty passages, tried the locked doors, or

[1] See Mr. J. A. Symonds' charming description of the Italian foothills in spring, in *Sketches from Italy and Greece*.

sniffed for any possible odour of kitchen. In vain one of my friends, phrase-book in hand, shouted out every call for waiter in use between Turin and Palermo. There was not even a cat left in the house; the owner had become bankrupt, and no one had had the courage to take his place. So we retired disconsolate to an 'Osteria Antica' in the heart of the town, where we found François already arrived.

If we were discomfited, our host was little less so. The fall of its rival had brought no second youth to the 'Osteria Antica.' It was kept by a haughty and, except as regards payment, indifferent landlord, whose household consisted of a vague and dilatory wife, a loutish and generally-in-the-way son, and a good-natured wench whose carrying qualities were for the most part thrown away, owing to there never being anything ready for her to carry. For hours François sat by the kitchen fire, with a resignation only smokers can attain, answering all enquiries in the monotonous refrain, 'On prépare, messieurs—on prépare toujours.'

It was 9 P.M. before the serving-girl entered with a bowl of liquid sufficient, in quantity at least, to have fed a regiment, and the torpid son broke for a moment into a smile as he placed on the table a huge carafe of 'Vino Vecchio.' Its age may have been owing to its repellent effect on previous topers, and so far as we were concerned it was at liberty to grow older still. Half-an-hour later, with unsatisfied appetites and injured digestions, we retired to two dingy and dubious bedrooms. Next morning the bill which awaited us was a triumph of caligraphy, extending to at least a column and a half of items. In the country inns of this part of Italy it is the usual custom to charge each loaf and

dish separately. But here the general taxes of great hotels formed a supplement to special charges for the very services in respect of which such taxes are generally supposed to be levied. Thus, after paying a sum for 'zucchero' and 'candele' which showed the high value set by the Introbbians on 'sweetness and light,' we were expected not only to make a further disbursement in consideration of boot-blacking and warm water, but also to remember the 'servizio' and 'portiere.' We were almost ashamed to disturb the result of so much labour and ingenuity by such a rough-and-ready proceeding as the tender of the lump sum which seemed to us more than adequate to the occasion.

Beyond Introbbio we plunged into the Bergamasque ranges, perhaps to Englishmen the least known fragment of the central Alps. Owing to the absence at their head of any peaks high or inaccessible enough to attract ardent climbers, the two great trenches which open on to the plain near Bergamo have not, like the valleys of Monte Rosa, come in the way of the Alpine Club. And it is to its members that we owe almost entirely our introduction to out-of-the-way corners. Yet an Italian valley, among mountains rising at its head to nearly 10,000 feet, is at least worth looking at. Val Brembana and Val Seriana might prove rivals to Val Mastalone and Val Sesia. At last, in 1874, I determined to carry out, at any rate in part, a long-formed intention, and see something of what lay within and behind the jagged line of peaks so long familiar to me from the high summits of the Engadine.

The Forcella di Cedrino, which forms the entrance from Introbbio to the upper branches of Val Brembana, is on the whole decidedly dull—a long steep ascent, a

broad undulating top, only remarkable for its laburnum thickets, and a commonplace glen on the other side. Near the first hamlet, Val Torta, the scenery improves. The old frescoed church and white houses hang on the steep side of a green basin among woods and shapely hills.

Thenceforth the path is charming. Descending at once to the clear slender stream it threads a tortuous defile, where at every corner the landscape changes. On the right rise the spurs of the many-crested Monte Arahita, clad almost to their tops in wood. Above the broken glens the limestone plays a hundred freaks, here cutting the sky with twisted spires and perforated towers, there throwing down a knife-edge buttress between the greenery. Opposite a broad opening on the left the stream is reinforced by three great fountains gushing directly out of the living rock.

A mile or two further, at Cassiglio, the glen opens and a carriage-road begins. Several of the old houses here are frescoed, one with a whimsical selection of old-world figures, another with a Dance of Death. In this 'Earthly Paradise,' as it appears to the northern wanderer, the mystery of death seems, as in Mr. Morris's poem, to be constantly present. The great reaper with his sickle is painted on the walls of dwelling-houses as well as churches. 'Morituro satis' writes the wealthy farmer over his threshold, the bones of his ancestors—nay, sometimes even their ghastly withered mummies—stare out at him through the iron grating of the deadhouse as he goes out to his work in the fields. And for the true son of the Church there is no such peace in prospect as for his foregoers, no 'Nox perpetua una dormienda,' or shadowy Hades.

His future is put before him in the most positive manner, by the care of priests and painters, on every wayside chapel. Whatever his life, he must when he dies take his place amongst that wretched throng of sufferers packed as closely as cattle in a truck, and plunged to a point perhaps determined by prudery in tongues of flame. His deliverance from this hideous place will, he is told, depend in great part on the importunity with which his surviving relatives address the saints on his behalf, and the sums they can afford to pay for masses to the priest. Roman Christianity for the peasantry represents the rule of the universe as a malevolent despotism tempered by influence and bribery. Fortunately, whatever they may profess, men seldom at heart accept a creed which makes the universe subject to Beings or a Being of worse passions than themselves.

Cassiglio stands above a watersmeet where a new face of the beautiful Monte Aralalta shuts in a wooded glen, through which a tempting path leads to the hamlets of Taleggio. All the hill-country between Val Brembana and the Bergamo-Lecco railway gives promise of the richest and most romantic scenery, and I can imagine nothing more delightful than to wander through its recesses in the long May days. My fancy seems, however, to be singular, for, so far as I know, not one out of the number of our countrymen who haunt Lago di Como in spring has taken advantage of his opportunity.

Below Cassiglio, Val Torta for the first time expands into a wide basin full of maize and walnuts. Presently it contracts again into a narrow funnel, which on a dull day, when the higher crests are in cloud, might be

fancied a Devonshire combe. At the junction of a considerable side-valley clusters of houses brighten the hillsides, and, where two roads meet, a clean country inn, with a terraced bowling-ground above the stream, invites to a halt.

The second road leads towards the Passo di San Marco, the lowest and easiest track from Bergamo to the Val Tellina.

Here, perhaps for the only time in these valleys, we come upon a track already described by an English traveller. The title of his volume at least is sufficiently attractive. I quote it in full:—

'Coryats Crudities Hastily gobbled up in five moneths travells in France Savoy Italy Rhetia commonly called the Grisions country Helvetia alias Switzerland some parts of High Germany and the Netherlands: Newly digested in the hungry aire of Odcombe in ye county of Somerset and now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling members of this kingdom.' London, 1611.

Readers, sated for the moment with the solid information to be gathered from our modern books of travel, may spend a refreshing half-hour in the company of this old traveller, who assumed in his public the same taste he had so strongly in himself, and was content to display undisguised a boyish delight in novelties, wonders, and adventure. He has, moreover, a special title to the respect of the modern Alpine traveller, for 'footmanship' was his great boast, and he delighted to be celebrated by his familiars as the 'Odcombian Leggestretcher.' I shall not apologise therefore for pausing for a moment—

——— To catechise
My picked man of countries

of the days of King James I., and to learn what he may have to say—

——— Of the Alps and Apennines,
The Pyrenean and the River Po.

In listening to Tom Coryat's gossip we realise as far as is now possible such an evening's entertainment as may have suggested these lines to Shakspeare. We can almost fancy ourselves seated in the Mermaid Tavern, while our traveller, swollen with his own importance, told his tales, and the wits laughed over some of the earliest 'Alpine shop.' The address of one of Coryat's letters 'to the Right Worshipfull Society of Sirenaical Gentlemen that meet the first Fridaie of every moneth at the signe of the Mermaide in Bread Street' shows him a frequent guest at the famous inn. His friends have drawn his character with force and perfect freedom. He was one of those wits who are more often laughed at than with. 'He is,' writes Ben Jonson, 'always Tongue-Major of the Company, and if ever perpetual motion be to be hoped it is from thence. He is frequent at all sorts of Free-Tables, where though he might sit as a guest he would rather be served in as a dish, and is loth to have anything of himself kept cold against the next day.' In conversation as well as writing he was an euphuist, 'a great carpenter of words.' Travel was so far his engrossing passion that he would give up any company to talk with even a carrier. 'The mere superscription of a letter from Zurich set him up like a top; Basel or Heidelberg made him spin.'

The prominent mention in the title of his book of Alpine regions naturally suggests that we may have here lit on an early appreciator of the Alps; and in

the first few pages this hope receives some confirmation. Mr. Stephen has told us that the Gothic cathedral and the granite cliffs have many properties in common, and that 'one might venture to predict from a man's taste in human buildings whether he preferred the delicate grace of lowland scenery or the more startling effects only to be seen in the heart of the mountains.' Coryat's avowal therefore that Amiens Cathedral is 'the Queen of all the churches in France and the fairest that ever I saw till then,' seems to promise well for his taste in mountains.

We get the first Alpine adventure just before reaching Chambery. Coryat was apparently a nervous horseman, and would not with his companions ride over the 'Mo'tagne Aiguebelette.' Consequently he was led 'to compound for a cardakew, which is eighteen pence English,' with 'certain poore fellowes which get their living especially by carrying men in chairs to the toppe of the mountain.' 'This,' he says, 'was the manner of their carrying of me. They did put two slender poles through certaine woodden rings which were at the foure corners of the chaire, and so carried me on their shoulders, sitting in the chaire, one before and another behinde; but such was the miserable paines that the poore slaves willingly undertooke for the gaine of that cardakew, that I would not have done the like for five hundred.' 'The worst wayes that ever I travelled in all my life in the summer were those betwixt Chamberie and Aiguebelle, which were as bad as the worst I ever rode in England in the midst of winter;' but still Coryat says, 'I commended Savoy a pretty while for the best place that ever I saw in my life for abundance of pleasant springs descending from the mountaines, till

at the last I considered the cause of those springs, for they are not fresh springs, as I conjectured at the first, but only little torrents of snow-water.' Why snow-water should be held of no value is explained afterwards. It is the cause of the bunches, 'almost as great as an ordinary football with us in England,' on the necks of the Savoyards. The swiftness of the Isère, the great blocks fallen from the mountain-side, of course strike Coryat, but he has also his eyes open for the snow-mountains; he mentions one 'wondrous high mountain at the top whereof there is an exceeding high rock,' and another 'covered with snow, and of a most excessive and stupendious height.' From Lanslebourg he sets out for the Cenis. 'The waies were exceeding uneasie, wonderfull hard, all stony, and full of windings and intricate turnings.' Coryat therefore had to walk down the mountain, passing on the way 'many people ascending, mules laden with carriage, and a great company of dunne kine driven up the hill with collars about their necks.'

The 'Roch Melow' (Roche Melon) was said to be 'the highest mountain of all the Alpes, saving one of those that part Italy and Germany.' We learn afterwards that this was the 'Mountaine Goddard, commonly esteemed the highest of all the Alpine mountains.'[1] Monte Viso Coryat knew only by name. Otherwise he has no information as to peaks, and he believes that the Alps 'consists of two ranges sunderd by the space of many

[1] In this statement Coryat is supported by the best Swiss authorities of the time. The belief in the pre-eminence of this part of the chain was probably grounded on the plausible argument that, as the two greatest rivers of the Alps rise in this group, and all rivers flow down hill, the region containing their sources must be the most elevated.

miles,' and dividing respectively Italy from France and Germany. As to passes, he mentions besides the Cenis, the Brenner, the St. Gothard and the Splugen; he knows that the Rhone springs from 'the Rheticall Alpes out of a certain high mountaine called Furca;' that the Rhine has two sources from 'the mountain Adula,' between which and the springs of the Rhone 'there is interjected no longer space than of 3 houres journey.' So much for his Alpine geography.

I wish I had space to follow Coryat into Italy, where he discovers forks and umbrellas, and describes them with the minuteness appropriate to such important novelties. Venice was the goal of his journey, and there he 'swam in a gondola' for six weeks—'the sweetest time (I must needs confesse) that ever I spent in my life.' He saw and describes all the sights we know so well, filled with the crowd which for us lives only in pictures, visited the Arsenal in its glory, was shown the Titians and Tintorettos in their fresh beauty, and bursts out into an enthusiasm which might satisfy Mr. Ruskin for that 'peerlesse place' the Piazza di San Marco.

Coryat's homeward journey through the Alps began at Bergamo. On reaching that town his route was altered by the news given him by a friendly Dominican monk, who warned him that a castle near the head of the Lago di Como was held by Spaniards,[1] who would have little scruple in submitting a heretic to the tortures of the Inquisition. He consequently gave up the lake for Val Brembana and the Passo di San Marco.

[1] On the rocky knoll in the centre of the delta of the Adda, I find printed on the Lombard map the Spanish word 'Fuentes.' This was doubtless the site of the castle.

In Val Brembana he saw exposed the bodies of some bandits, members of a party of thirty who had been recently captured while lying in wait for passengers to the great fair of Bergamo. The Passo di San Marco was then the limit of Venetian rule, and the frontier was marked by an inn bearing on its front the golden-winged lion. The house still exists.

In descending towards the Val Tellina Coryat saw the Bergamasque flocks being driven home from their summer pasturages. Near Chiavenna the 'very sharp and rough stones' were 'very offensive to foot travellers;' on the other hand, the security of the country was such that a priest told him no robbery had ever been heard of. The passage of the Splugen is passed over very slightly. The cataracts of the Rofna defile attracted Coryat's notice, but the old path of course did not penetrate the crack of the Via Mala.

The inveterate Swiss habit of reckoning distance by hours rather than miles is justly criticised as yielding 'a very uncertain satisfaction to a traveller, because the speed of all is not alike in travelling: for some can travel further in one hour than others in three.'

At Ragatz he leaves 'Rhetia' for 'Helvetia,' and at Walenstadt Val Tellina wine, of which he has a good opinion, for Rhenish. Swiss diet he finds 'passing good in most places,' and 'the charge something reasonable,' varying from a Spanish shilling to 15*d.* of English money. Duvets are novelties observed for the first time in Swiss inns, and much appreciated.

In Zurich Coryat was taken to see the sword of William Tell and told his history, on which he very pertinently suggested that 'it would have been much better to have preserved the arrow.' At the Swiss

Baden he was shown and properly shocked at the sociable manner of bathing, which seems not to have differed much, except in the quantity of clothing worn, from that now in use at Leukerbad. At Basel Switzerland is left, with the unexpected remark that the bridge, the established favourite of modern sketch-books, is 'a base and mean thing.' But our traveller has already led us too far from the high-road of Val Brembana—and here we must leave him to find his way home.

After all, what impression did the mountains make on Coryat? I think we must answer, about the same as on a commonplace tourist of our own day who has sufficient sturdiness of mind to be independent of fashion in his likes and dislikes. Horror of them he has none, and their dangers he is little disposed to exaggerate.[1]

He is struck by a bold peak; he notes a waterfall; he is amused to find himself above the clouds; he likes to be able to see a good many things at once, as from St. Mark's tower, whence he admires 'The Alpes, the Apennines, the pleasant Euganean hills, with a little

[1] Unless indeed we take him to task for a passage found, of all odd places, in an answer to a Chancery Bill filed by a certain 'vilipendious ironfraper,' to restrain him from common law proceedings for the recovery of debts. His 'wesute adversarie,' amongst other impertinent matters, seems to have inserted allegations as to the 'smallness and commonness' of Coryat's voyage. The enraged traveller retorts, with an eloquence seldom rivalled by modern pleaders, 'has he not walked above the clouds over hils that are at least 7 miles high? For indeed so high is the mountaine Ceyns, the danger of which is such, that if in some places the traveller should but trip aside in certaine narrow wayes that are scarcely a yard broade, he is precipitated into a very stygian lacrathrum, or Tartarean lake, six times deeper than Paul's tower is high.' Has he not 'continually stood in feare of the Alpine cut-throats called the Bandits?'

world of other most delectable objects.' But he has not an imaginative mind, and a few days is a short time in which to develop an intelligent taste for mountain scenery. He is at a loss in the Alps from want of familiarity. His feeling towards them may be fairly illustrated by his attitude in matters of art. He is equally embarrassed by the glorious Tintorettos of the ducal palace. These he can only note down, he cannot appreciate. What he really could understand and admire comes out naïvely elsewhere. He saw in a 'painter's shop,' near San Marco, two things which 'I did not a little admire, a picture of a hinder quarter of veal —the rarest invention that ever I saw before,' and 'the picture of a Gentlewoman whose eyes were contrived that they moved up and down of themselves, not after a seeming manner but truly and indeed.'

The neighbouring village of Olmo produced a carriage. A short drive through an open valley brought us to Piazza, the market-town and centre of the upper valley, placed on a low flat-topped brow, the last spur of the range dividing the stream of Val Torta from the Brembo. Throughout these valleys the villages, although in number of inhabitants only villages, take the air of towns. Italians, as contrasted with Swiss, are essentially a town-loving race; north of the Alps it is mere matter of chance whether the brown cottages are scattered widely over the hillsides or clustered together; the southerner is more sociable and more ambitious, having ever before his eyes the nearest large town as a model. Even in the mountains he likes his native place to boast a 'piazza,' and perhaps even a 'Corso,' a name which can be easily stuck on to the first quarter

of a mile of road. He builds lofty white houses and ranges them along the sides of a narrow street, which, with its barred windows, gloomy little shops, and bright fruitstalls, might be in a back quarter of Bergamo or even Milan.

The ambition of Piazza is leading it to erect a vast church with columns and porticoes, incongruous enough in a mountain landscape. Beneath the uncompleted edifice a car-road turns off to the upper Val Brembana and Branzi. The high-road goes away to the south through a narrow rift in the hills in company with the united streams. I longed to follow it and see something more of the Bergamasque valleys than their heads. Amongst these bold hills rising so near the plain there must be a crowd of landscapes of romantic beauty, and from every brow the most exquisite views. Moreover if Herr Iwan von Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer' is as trustworthy in matters of art as with respect to mountains this region is rich indeed. In every village church there are said to be good pictures.[1] The great names of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese are coupled in the list with a host of local painters, such as Cavagna and G. B. Moroni, many of them natives of the upland villages in which their works are found. But it must be remembered that hidden gems are rare, and that in remote hamlets great names are readily bestowed and seldom disputed. The real worth of these art-remains is a matter to be determined by further research. Objects of architectural interest are less open to doubt.[1] At Almenno San Salvatore is

[1] Since writing the above, I have been favoured by Signor Curò, President of the Bergamasque Section of the Italian Alpine Club, with a list of some of the most remarkable works of art in this region. It is printed as Appendix B.

a small Rotunda of the fifth century dedicated to St. Thomas: at Almè an old and very remarkable chapel attributed by popular legend to the Gothic queen Theodolinda. In the church of Leprenno, itself of the twelfth century, is to be seen 'a costly altar brought out of England at the time of the schism under Henry VIII.'

Convenient resting-places are not wanting. At Zogno, in Val Brembana, there is said to be a 'delightful' inn; at San Pellegrino, higher in the valley, and at San Omobuono, in Val Imagna, bathing establishments described as 'comfortable and much frequented.' For the present, however, I had to turn my back on these varied attractions. Athletic companions, a Chamonix guide, and four ice-axes, all pointed towards the rocks and snows, and were only prevented from rushing straight to the Bernina or the Adamello by my assertion, somewhat recklessly made, that there were glaciers in the next valley.

Our course lay up the eastern stream by a country road rougher than that we had left, but still passable for spring-carriages. In the morning the variety of Val Torta had come up to our hopes, the scenery of the main valley for the next two hours surpassed them. The rocky defile leading to Branzi fairly rivals any of the similar scenes amongst the branches of Val Sesia. If less noble and majestic than Val Bavona or Val di Genova, it could scarcely be more fascinating. The track climbs steeply amidst ruddy boulders and cliff faces stained a deep purple. Against these the chestnuts stretch their green branches or spread out at their feet in banks where the deep green of the leaves is shot with the lighter hue of the unripe fruitpod. Side-glens break through the opposing walls and give variety to the

gorge, peaks bold in form and rich in colour fill the gaps, the water is blue and sparkling, the foliage fresh and varied. Churches and villages, with the usual accompaniments of frescoed campaniles and high-pitched bridges, are always ready in the right place to give variety to each sunny picture.

Nature presents herself in Val Brembana in a bright fantastic mood, full of life and vigour, yet not so earnest and severe as to strain our comprehension or our sympathy, or so large as to be beyond—more than, in its many-sidedness, all nature is beyond—the grasp of even an unambitious art. To employ a much-abused yet useful phrase, the scenery is essentially picturesque.

The valley when it opens again is more Alpine, although we are still only at the moderate height of 2,200 feet. A village, Trabuchetto, stands on the edge of the first meadows of a long steep-sided basin fringed with pines. For the next mile or two the road runs at a level over fields of the greenest turf broken by mossy boulders. A very slight ascent leads up to the first houses of Branzi, the chief place of the upper valley, locally famous for a great cheese-fair held in September, before the departure of the herds for the plain.

Steep hills hem in on all sides the verdant meadows amongst which the village stands. Two streams and paths, issuing out of deep-cut clefts, descend from the chain dividing us from the Val Tellina. A third torrent pours down from the top of the eastern hillside, some 3,000 feet above, in a scarcely broken fall which only wants volume, and must be superb after any heavy rains.

Driving under a dark archway we entered the little

piazza, and, following a priest's directions, passed one not ill-looking 'osteria,' and sought another standing back from the high-road at the top of the village. Here again we were fated to be disappointed in our inn. Our arrival was doubly ill-timed. In the first place the house was under repair, and the upstairs rooms—if in their present condition they could be called rooms—showed ribs as bare as a ship in the first stage of construction. Secondly the culinary and conversational resources of the establishment were alike engrossed on behalf of two Italian 'Alpinisti' who had preceded us.

The 'Alpinista' is a novelty in Italy, and seems to bid fair to become a fashionable one. His creation is due to the assiduous zeal of the promoters of the Italian Alpine Club. That institution has ends far broader and deeper than those proposed by the founders of our own merely social club. Among its many objects are the strengthening of good-fellowship between the different provinces of United Italy, the advancement of science by the multiplication of observatories and other means, and the promotion of the welfare of the mountain districts by turning attention to the preservation of their forests and the embankment of their streams, and also by attracting to them some of the foreign gold which flows so freely into the pockets of their Swiss neighbours. Such a body demands of course no climbing qualification. Yet there are in Italy some proved and first-rate mountaineers, and, if the outward appearance of the novices is sometimes amusing to an Englishman, it is only owing to the apparent incongruity between a southern face and figure and an equipment so completely British, from the knapsack down to the boots, that one is tempted to believe the

Italian Club must have given a wholesale order in Oxford Street for a regulation dress. But these young mountaineers are, as a rule, very pleasant fellows, and though exceedingly vague on mountain matters in general walk well. On the present occasion I fear we wished our fellow-guests elsewhere, for their claim to precedence turned our dinner into one of those hopes deferred which make the heart—or something very near it—sick.

There are on the map two obvious passes from Branzi to Val Seriana, one following the main valley to its principal head, the other climbing beside the waterfall and then traversing a wide stretch of lofty lakelet-dotted table-land. We chose the latter. The first ascent seemed endless; the houses of Branzi were always but a stone's throw in lateral distance, while the bells of its church tower rang out successive quarters of an hour enough to have put us ten miles off in any reasonable country. At last a green hillock was turned and the upper region discovered; a long green valley with shelving sides surrounded by bold scattered peaks. A terrace-path led along the hillside past an opening within which lies a large lake, the object of the day's walk of the 'Alpinisti.' We passed presently another tarn of clear blue water, the Lago di Gornigo, hidden away among the hills. The scenery was pleasing though not of a high order, but near the lake an exquisite touch of beauty was given to it by the apparition of Monte Rosa, a frail opal vision floating on the tops of the nearer ranges.

Grassy banks lead to the apparent pass. On reaching it, however, it is, in clear weather, easy to see that the glen on the further side is another feeder of Val Brem-

bana. A short level traverse to the right, or the ascent of the rocky knoll in the same direction, leads to a point overlooking the true valley of descent. But the Y-shaped ridges may well perplex a stranger, and the pass, though absolutely free from difficulty, is one where most people will find a native indicator useful. From the knoll where the two ridges join Monte Rosa is still seen, together with several of the Bernina peaks and a wide view to the eastward.

The entire descent was for a pass of this nature exceedingly fine and varied. First we plunged under purple cliffs and past a chalet into a wilderness of stone blocks, a rough setting for a cluster of gem-like pools; some blue, some the colour of the Bluebeard when, to quote the latest version of an old story, 'it writhed in an indigo blackness.' Then a steep rocky stair or 'scala' amongst waterfalls, and a stride over juniper bushes brought us to a path, level, green, shaded by tall pines, with bright glimpses of distant hills and once of the golden floor of Lago d' Iseo between the moss-grown columns. We came out on to a mountain of hayfields, whence the Presolana, an isolated limestone mass between us and the Val di Scalve, tried with some success to look like the Pelmo.

When we turned downwards the path was a stony impossibility, and trespassing on the new-mown turf a delicious and harmless necessity. Beyond a picturesque, warm-looking village we were caught between maize-fields by a most penitential pavé, which led to a corner where a handsome young priest advanced book in hand before a fountain and a vista, as complete a picture as any composed for Burlington House.

Gromo and the 'Strada Provinciale' were now below

us, and in five minutes more we passed under the church tower and the one unfallen feudal keep which still overshadows the village, and found ourselves at the doorway of the inn. This time there was no disappointment. We entered a large, handsome house, with a kitchen and a store-room, such as the painters of Bassano so often chose for subjects, dark and cool, yet lit with the reflected gleams of copper and the bright hues of southern fruit and vegetables.

Food here was as ready and good as it had been lately hard to obtain and indifferent; and but for the distance from the head of the valley and our next mountain we should have gladly stayed the night. Forewarned, but we felt also forearmed, against the kitchen of Bondione, we mounted the carriage which had been without difficulty procured for us.

Val Seriana, at any rate in its upper portion, is wider and straighter than Val Brembana, and the mountains, although lofty, do not make up in sublimity for what they lose in variety. As far as Fiumenero the drive is in fact a trifle monotonous. At this point the river turns round a sharp corner, and its last reach, backed by the horseshoe cliffs closing the valley, comes into view.

The Monte Redorta (9,975 feet), the highest summit between Lago di Como and the Aprica Pass, rises in rough tiers of precipice on the left. Near Bondione large iron mines are worked, and the leading industry gives the place the air of hopeless grime peculiar to underground pursuits. Dirt nowhere looks so dirty as on the pure mountains, and the village is the last place one would care to make a stay in. Moreover nothing can be less tempting than the inn, although a neigh-

bouring house provides the unexpected luxury of two decent bedrooms and clean beds.

The houses are built among the huge ruins of a fallen buttress of the Redorta; and the natural cavities under the boulders, which are rather bigger than the houses, serve the inhabitants for store-rooms, cellars, and other purposes. The population of Bondione seem to hold firmly to the theory expounded to Peter Simple that a second cannon-ball never comes through the hole made by the first, and to look on these, to strangers somewhat unpleasantly suggestive neighbours, as among the 'amenities' of their situation.

Next morning we crossed the river by a bridge, beyond which was an 'osteria' with a rhyming sign, suggesting to the wayfarer bound for the Barbellino the need of refreshing himself first with the 'buon vino' of the host. Leaving on the right a glen through which an easy track crosses to the remote villages of Val di Scalve, a steady ascent through beech copses led us to a narrow platform at the foot of a great rock wall, like that which bars the Schachenthal in Canton Uri. It is difficult to see where the path will find passage; at the left-hand corner the Serio flings itself off the brow, crashing on the rocks, and throwing itself out again with fresh energy into space. As we mounted the steep zigzags of the path the first arrows of sunlight, shooting over the hills and striking obliquely across the rock-face, caught the most outward-flung part of the fall, leaving the crags behind still in shadow. Seldom had we witnessed so fantastic and fairylike a play of the elements as that now exhibited before our eyes. The water-rockets, thrown out in regular succes-

sion from the first rude contact of stream and rock, leapt forth masses of pure cold white. In a moment, as they entered the illumined space, they were transfigured in a glory of reflected light. The comparison to a bursting firework is inevitable but unworthy. At first they shone with the colours of the rainbow, then with a hundred other indescribably delicate and unexpected shades, from a brilliant green-blue to a rich purple. A minute or two later and the cloud of foam below caught the illumination, and the whole cascade was one mass of radiant colour thrown out against a dark background.

When the coat of many colours was stripped from it the fall, though a fine one, did not seem full enough to rank in the very first class of Alpine cascades. But its comparative merits can hardly be decided without a nearer approach than we made.

A slight gap in the rocky crest lets the path through to the Barbellino Alp, a flat meadow, hemmed in by rugged slopes. Near the huts we halted for breakfast and to decide on our future course. We were bound to Val Camonica, and time not allowing us to explore Val di Scalve, had determined to cross the ridge separating the head of Val Seriana from Val Belviso, a side-glen of the Val Tellina, by which the Aprica posthouse could be gained without a preliminary plunge into the great valley. The straightest and easiest course was doubtless to strike the ridge due east of Lago Barbellino, where, although no track is shown on the map, it is certainly easy to pass. But the day was fine enough for a peak, and Monte Gleno lying at the angle of the chain where it turns northward round the sources of

the Serio, seemed capable of being combined with a pass into Val Belviso.

Seen from the Barbellino Alp, the Pizzo di Cocca and its neighbours are a bold group of rock-peaks, but they do not show any ice. My friends did not fail to point out this unfortunate deficiency, and to remind me that I had only a few hours left within which to produce the promised glacier which was to justify the intrusion of rope and ice-axes into Bergamasque valleys.

My own confidence in my assertions, never very strong, was now at its lowest ebb, and I could only repeat them with renewed vigour. Fortunately, unexpected assistance was afforded me by the stream which joins the Serio at the upper end of the level pasturage. Its waters were milky white, a strong indication that it was iceborn.

We followed the sides of this torrent, climbing by steep sheep-paths, until we were almost on a level with the base of the surrounding peaks. A rocky bluff cut off the view of what lay beyond. The head of the glen was evidently a broad basin, but how was it filled? Suddenly we saw before us a sheet of ice at least two miles long by one broad—the glacier of Val Seriana.

The broken pinnacles of the Corno dei Tre Confini shot up opposite us on the right, and between two broad snowy depressions rose the comb of Monte Gleno. To reach it we must ascend the glacier. The ice, though in places steep, was not rent by any wide fissures, and an hour's quick walking brought us to the gap at the north-east base of the mountain. Below us, as we had hoped, lay Val Belviso.

Fifteen minutes of rapid scrambling finished the peak, the highest between the Barbellino and Aprica

Passes.[1] There was no sign on the summit of any earlier visitor.

The distance was for the most part in cloud, but the Adamello group was excellently seen, and the rock-wall above Val Miller, by which I had once descended, appeared as impossible as any easy climb well could. Val di Scalve was at our feet, and looked inviting, as did the carriage-road winding away from it towards Clusone over the spurs of the fortress-like Presolana.

Two clefts or chimneys offered themselves for the descent. We were I think right in choosing the northernmost or furthest from the peak. The other, as seen afterwards from below, seemed steep for a greater distance. The first few hundred feet required considerable care. The centre of the cleft was swept bare and smooth by spring avalanches, and cut in many places by low cliffs. We made therefore frequent use of the more broken crags on our right, where there was plenty of hold both for legs and arms. We did not meet with any serious difficulties, although we suffered now and then from a momentary embarrassment consequent on having put the wrong foot foremost, a mistake which the practised climber is always ready to retract.

Had it not been for the course of action pursued by one of my companions we might perhaps have got down in shorter time. Having some old grudge, as what Alpine Clubman has not, against a loose stone, he had this year constituted himself the foe of the race, and the chief adjutant of Time in his attack on the mountains. Did an unlucky rock show the smallest tendency

[1] The height may be roughly estimated at 9,300 feet.

to looseness, down it went. Resistance was useless, for my friend's perseverance and patience are proverbial; the rock might retain roots which would have held it for a century, but an ice-axe will serve also as a crow-bar, and sooner or later,—down it went.

The process was necessarily sometimes tedious, and those behind watching it from a constrained perch, even if not susceptible enough to see in the downward roar and shiver of the released rock what might happen to themselves if they did not hold on, were liable to become impatient and to protest against the violence of the attack on a peak which had really done nothing to provoke such treatment, and might possibly take to reprisals. A volley from the upper ledges would have been anything but pleasant.

After creeping round the edges of some snow-beds, too short and steep to glissade, the angle of the slope diminished and banks of loose stones fell away to a brow overlooking the highest pasturage. This consists of two shelves, divided by a low cliff and cut off by a much deeper one from the valley. At the châlets on the lower shelf the herdsmen recommended us a long circuit round the head of the glen. With some hesitation we decided to trust the map, and took to the left, keeping at a level for twenty minutes as far as another group of huts. Thence we descended rapidly a trackless hillside, until on drawing near the forest we found a shady path to take us to the bottom.

The upper half of Val Belviso is smooth, green, and pleasant, with fine backward views of Monte Gleno and its gullies, and near at hand a clear, copious stream always dashing in and out of still, deep-coloured pools.

Lower down the path becomes steep, stony, and tiresome, and everyone was glad when the last bridge—a bold arch near some ruined mills—seemed to put us within a definite distance of the end. I have seldom known a warmer or more beautiful half hour's walk than the climb of a thousand feet round a projecting hillside to the village of Aprica.

But the high-road to the Adamello marks the close of the Bergamasque valleys.

CHAPTER VII.

VAL CAMONICA AND THE GIUDICARIA.

Vineyards and maize, that's pleasant for sore eyes.—Clough.

THE APRICA PASS—EDOLO—VAL CAMONICA—CEDEGOLO—VAL SAVIORE—LAGO D'ARNO—MONTE CASTELLO—VAL DI FUM—VAL DAONE—LAGO DI LEDRO—RIVA—THE BORDER OF THE SARCA—VAL RENDENA—THE FRA FIORI—VAL D'ALGONE—STENICO—THE HIGH ROAD TO TRENT.

Our acquaintances might, I sometimes fancy, be roughly divided into two classes. There are some who find sympathy in inanimate nature by itself; there are many to whom the universe speaks only through the person of their fellow creatures.

With the latter, human interests and emotions are always in the front, and the most glorious landscape or the most thrilling sunset makes only a background to the particular mites in whom they are for the moment interested. Nature is just thought worthy to play a humble accompaniment to the piece—to act the part of the two or three fiddlers who are left in the orchestra to give forth soft music when the heroine dreams, or a triumphant squeak at the approach of the hero. Such dispositions, and they are often those of most strength or genius, colour nature out of their own consciousness rather than accept impressions from without.

There is much to be said at the present day for this

mood. The long line of evolution so slightly alluded to in the Book of Genesis between the mud and the man has been nearly made out. Why should we waste more time over the lower developments of matter than is necessary to ascertain our own family history? The human intelligence, philosophers tell us, is the crowning flower of the universe. Let us then no longer worship stocks and stones, or invisible and inconceivable abstractions, but reserve all our attention for the highest thing we know, and concentrate ourselves on our fellow creatures. Thus perhaps we shall best urge on that true golden age, when mankind, grown less material, will burn with a purer jet of intellect, when Mr. Wallace will talk with spirits who can talk sense and Mr. Galton and artificial selection will have replaced Cupid with his random darts.

Yet we can never wholly separate ourselves from the system of which we form a part. 'Homo sum nihil humani' requires such extension as will include the universe. Positivist congregations are, I believe, in the habit of expressing their grateful acknowledgments to interplanetary space. Even advanced thinkers therefore may pardon a sentiment for such much nearer relations as the crystalline rocks.

Those, however, who deliberately prefer at all times the study of human emotion to the inarticulate voice of nature must not—unless indeed they are prepared to live, as few travellers can, amongst the people of the country—come to the Lombard Alps. Their field of observation is on the terrace at St. Moritz or on the summit of Piz Languard; and they will do well to picnic in company amongst Swiss pines rather than to wander alone under Italian beeches.

The road which links the Adamello country to the Stelvio highway, and through it to the Bernina Pass and Upper Engadine, leaves the Val Tellina midway between Tirano and Sondrio, and only a few hours' drive from Le Prese. For many miles it climbs in one enormous zigzag through the chestnut forests, until from the last brow overlooking the Val Tellina it gains a view which, of its kind, has few rivals. I have seen it twice under very different circumstances.

First in early morning, half-an-hour after a June sunrise, the air ringing with the song of birds and bells, the high crest of the Disgrazia golden in light, the long shadows of the Bergamasque mountains falling across their lower slopes, the white villages caught here and there by sunbeams, the broad valley throwing off a light cover of soft mist. Beneath us Italy, around the Alps: and when these two meet lovingly, what can nature do more?

Again on a late autumn afternoon, in dumb sultry heat, the sunlight veiled for the most part in yellow mists, but breaking forth from time to time with vivid force, and answered by lightning from the thick impenetrable pall lying over the Disgrazia, and the masses of storm-cloud gathering on the lower ranges. The valley silent and mournful, all peace and harmony gone, the mountains glaring savagely from their obscurity, as if their wild nature had broken loose from the shrinking loveliness at its feet, and was preparing for it outrage and ruin.

From the inn known as 'The Belvedere' it is still half-an-hour's ascent to the smooth meadows which form the watershed between the Val Camonica and the Val Tellina, the well-named Aprica Pass.

The descent towards Edolo lies through the green and fertile Val Corteno. As the capital of the upper Val Camonica is approached lofty snow-capped crags tower opposite. These are not part of the main mass of the Adamello, but belong to the outlying group of Monte Aviolo.

Edolo lies on either side of a strong green torrent, fed by the eternal snows, which seems a river compared to the slender streams of the Bergamasque valleys. Across the bridge on a high platform stand a large white church and campanile, backed by rich foliage and a hillside, steep yet fertile, which rises straight into the clouds. The little mountain-town is mediæval and Italian in character. The streets are narrow and shady; old coats-of arms are carved on the walls, queer-headed monsters glower between the windows, arched loggias run round the interior courtyards. The place tells you it has a history, and one wonders for a moment what that history was. We know that German emperors came this way through the mountains, that Barbarossa confirmed the liberties of Val Camonica, and that Maximilian once halted within these walls. Further details must be sought in the works of local historians and in the libraries of Bergamo or Brescia.

Edolo has long been notorious for bad inns. Lately, however, the 'Leone d'Oro,' the house in the centre of the town, has come into the hands of a most well-meaning proprietor, who provides very fair food and lodging at reasonable prices. Unfortunately nothing seems to get rid of the extraordinarily pungent flavour of stables which has for years pervaded the premises. I can only compare it to that of an underground stall in Armenia, in which it was once my ill-fortune to spend

the night. Such a smell convinces one that at least there can be no difficulty as to means of conveyance. Strangers are doubly annoyed when they discover that they are in one of the few towns in the Alps where it is often impossible at short notice to get horses or a carriage. If animals even cannot endure the atmosphere, it is surely high time to advertise 'Wanted a Hercules.'

On my last visit the demand for a carriage and pair was triumphantly met by the production of a diligence that had retired on account of old age and failing powers from public service, but was still ready to do a job for friends. Although built to contain some fifteen persons, it was so ingeniously arranged that, except from the box-seats, nothing could possibly be seen except the horses' tails and a few yards of highroad. We were compelled to cluster round the driver like a bunch of schoolboys, leaving the body of our machine to lumber along empty in the rear.

To drive down Val Camonica on a fresh summer's morning before the sunlight has lost its first grace and glitter, when, without a breath of wind, every particle in earth and air, and even our own dull frames, seem to vibrate with the joy of existence, is to have one of the most delicious sensations imaginable. The scenery rivals and equals that of the Val d'Aosta near Villeneuve. The valley curves gracefully, the hillsides are cut by ravines or open out into great bays rich with woods. Every bush stands clearly defined in the translucent air, every leaf reflects back from a lustrous surface, unclogged by damp and smuts, the welcome sunbeams with which the whole atmosphere is in a dance. Lower down the slopes sweep out in folds of chestnut forest. High overhead a company of granitic peaks stand up

stiff and straight in their icy armour against an Italian sky.

Below the opening of Val di Malga there is a long straight reach of road; then Val Paisco, with a path leading to Val di Scalve, is passed on the right and a bridge crossed. Amidst broken ground and closing hillsides we approached Cedegolo, a considerable village, built between two torrents and under sheltering rocks, in a sunny romantic situation. As we drove up the street a quack doctor, taking advantage of the assembly drawn down to Sunday high mass, was haranguing a crowd of bright-kerchiefed girls and bronzed peasants from the hill villages. Women from the lower valley were offering for sale grapes, figs and peaches of the second crop, the latter red as roses and hard as bullets.

The inn here has been visited and commended by several travellers as clean and comfortable. Such praise it fully merits, but on other grounds we had much reason to complain of the Cedegolans.

The habit of asking a very great deal more than you expect to get, common in foreign, and particularly in Italian shops, is perhaps as often an amusement as a vexation. The practice is most likely a survival from the old system of barter, which must have necessarily been incompatible with fixed prices. It will always be noted when time becomes of more value to the purchaser than a possible diminution in price. Heavy denunciations of its immorality sound to me rather odd when they come from the mouths of those who themselves adopt in large affairs the very same practice they condemn in small. Why it should be dishonest to ask more than you will take for a ring or a piece of lace,

but perfectly right and fair to do the same for a house or estate is a difficult question. The answer must be sought from our worthy countryman who discourses on the rascality of the Jew with whom he haggled six months for a cameo, and if he wants to get rid of a farm is ready to fight for the hundreds sterling as hardly as ever shopkeeper for the francs.

But the inconvenience of a system of bargain becomes, it must be allowed, intolerable, when it is adopted by innkeepers. Their charges differ from others in not being usually a subject of previous arrangement. From the beginning the relation is a friendly one; there is, or ought to be, a tacit understanding between host and guest that no undue advantage will be taken. An extortionate bill is felt by the traveller as a breach of good faith, and he resents it accordingly. Of course it is always open to him to settle the price of everything before he takes it. But fortunately this precaution is seldom necessary, and it is much too tiresome to be adopted generally on the chance.

However, I must, I fear, recommend this last resource to those who visit Cedegolo, or the more western Bergamasque valleys. If they do not adopt it they will often have to choose between paying five francs for a bed or having their parting delayed and embittered by a discussion, which, whatever its result weak concession or successful protest, leaves behind it nothing but unpleasant recollections.

In this respect the unfrequented German Alps are happier resorts for the wanderer. One could wish that these Italians had a little less vigour of imagination, and did not see in every foreigner a mine of unlimited wealth. If the story of the golden-egg-laying goose

exists in their language, the nearest branch of the National Alpine Club would do well to distribute it as a tract throughout Cedegolo, and in one or two other villages which I should be happy to indicate.

Val Saviore, the valley which joins Val Camonica at Cedegolo, is a deep, short trough running west and east. The hillsides on the left bank of its stream are steep and uninhabited. High upon them a white spot is conspicuous against the green. It is an ice-cave, where the snow never melts from year's end to year's end. The opposite sunward-facing slopes are more gentle, and the principal villages lie high up on the mountain side. Behind them two torrents issue out of deep recesses, the Val di Salarno and Val d'Adame, the heads of which are closed by branches of the great Adamello ice-field.[1]

A short zigzag amongst the boles and roots of an old chestnut forest brought us to the level of the straight trench-like valley, from which no view is gained of the neighbouring snows. But the scenery had scarcely time to grow monotonous before we reached Fresine, a smutty charcoal-burners' hamlet on the banks of the Salarno torrent, and at the foot of the northern hill-side.

A little further are the few houses of Isola, so called from their peninsular position between the torrent issuing from Val d'Adame and the smaller stream from Lago d'Arno. The hillside to be climbed before we could see this lake, shown on maps as one of the largest of high Alpine tarns, looked very long, steep and warm, and it proved considerably longer, steeper and warmer than it looked. It is one of the greatest climbs of its

[1] See Appendix A. for mention of the passes they offer.

kind in the Alps. The Adamello valleys abound in steep steps or 'scalas,' but this surpasses all the others, near or far. From Isola to the water's edge the barometer showed a difference of level of over 4,000 feet. For two-thirds of the ascent the gradient and character of the path are the same as those of a turret staircase, and the only level places are old charcoal-burners' platforms. For the rest of the way the track, after having climbed the cliff-faces which enclose the lower falls, penetrates the mountain side by a cleft, through which the stream descends in a succession of cascades and rapids. Except for its ambition to do too many feet in the hour, the path could not be pleasanter. It winds through a shifting and picturesque foreground of wood, crag and water, behind which the far-off peaks of the Zupo, Bella Vista and Palu shine like snowy pavilions spread out against the evening sun.

It might be worth a geologist's or physical geographer's while to follow this track. On the vexed question of the share of work done by glaciers in excavating valleys and lake-basins I do not presume to offer an opinion. But I think a careful examination of the Adamello group could scarcely fail to repay the trouble and add some new materials for the discussion. In the numerous lakes scattered amongst the upper branches of Val Camonica the followers of Professor Ramsay may find support for their views. The believers in the potent action of glaciers in the excavation of valleys will see in the Val di Fum one of the few valleys in the Alps which answer to the picture fancy draws of what a nice-dug valley should be like. On the other hand they would be called on to explain how the majority of glaciers came to act in a manner so unlike

plains, and left the Val di Genova, and nearly every other valley of the group, a mere flight of stairs. If the bed of the Lago d'Arno was once occupied by ice it must have presented an appearance not unlike the lowest plain of the Mandron Glacier, with a tongue curling over towards Val Saviore.

A warm glow still rested on the granite ridges and glaciers, but in the hollow all was already blue and grey, when the level of Lago d'Arno at last opened before our eyes. A long, still sheet of dark water wound away out of sight between bare hillsides, broken only here and there by a solitary pine. There was no sound but the gentle lapping of the waves or the continual murmur of a distant waterfall. The air seemed fraught with a solemn peacefulness, the strange mere to be a living thing asleep among the dead mountains. It was a scene to recall all old legends of enchanted pools, and a spectre bark or an arm 'robed in white samite' would in the falling gloom have seemed perfectly natural and in keeping.

The character of the landscape was in no respect Italian. It was scarcely Swiss, but rather, if I may judge of the unseen from painters, Norwegian. High Alpine tarns are for the most part circular or straight-sided; seldom, like Lago d'Arno, long, serpentine sheets of water. Moreover its great height above the sea, by giving sternness to the shores and bringing the snows down close upon them, naturally suggests a more northern latitude.

We hurried along the rough hillside in search of the fisherman's hut which was to be our night quarters. We found it among the boulders on the very brink of the water.

Previous experience of Adamello huts had inspired me with the deepest distrust of our prospects. But this time our shelter, if lowly in outward appearance, proved comfortable enough inside. At one end of the little cabin blazed a cheery fire, the smoke of which, for a wonder, found its way out without first making the round of the interior. At the other end was a hay-bed, arranged like a berth in two shelves, one above the other. The centre was occupied by a bench; and there were spoons and mugs stuck into odd holes and corners. Two worthy but fussy fowls cackled away under the roof, apparently embarrassed by the hospitable reflection that with their best endeavours they could hardly provide eggs for the whole party. The only other tenant in possession was a bright-eyed boy. A great many English boys would have seen in his tenement their ideal of a Robinson Crusoe home. Even to us disillusioned wanderers it looked fascinating, and had we been any of us fishermen we might have been induced to spend a day or two in paddling about in the triangular tub which was moored close by.

Daylight had barely lighted us to our goal, and now night added its mystery to this wild spot. Faint rays from a still unseen moon lit up the opposite peaks and snows, the great stars shone and were reflected in the dark depths of sky and lake which faced each other.

In the earliest dawn the fisherboy launched his craft, and soon returned with a fine pink-fleshed trout which we carried off with us. He then led us up the steep rocks behind his hut to regain the track we had left the night before.

The path from Isola is not the only route to the Passo di Monte Campo. We shortly joined a broader

track, which makes a long circuit from the lower valley, and is said to be passable for horses, which the staircase we had climbed could scarcely be called, though cows were evidently in the habit of using it. When we left our boy it was quite a pleasure, after the impositions of the last few days, to see his simple delight over a piece of silver. The metal is rare in Italy in these days of paper currency.

The lake, seen from the high terraces which we were now traversing, appeared to be about three miles in length. It does not entirely fill the basin, at the upper end of which is an alp and a small pool. Higher up on the right lie the ice-fields and blunt summits of Monte Castello. The ridge to be crossed now comes into view—a long saw, the teeth of which, tolerably uniform in height, stretch from a rocky eminence (Monte Campo) on the north to the glaciers on the south. The path, running as a terrace along a steep hillside, gains, with little climbing, a broad grassy gap near the foot of Monte Campo. The ruined cabin on the crest may either be a douanier's outpost or a relic of the Garibaldian corps, which in 1866 bivouacked here with bold intentions but small result. This country has not been fortunate for the Italian Irregulars. A body who established themselves near Ponte di Legno, and talked largely about invading Val di Sole, were surprised one morning by the Austrians anticipating their visit. The unlucky volunteers were all at breakfast, scattered about the village, and before they could offer any effective resistance were crushed with great slaughter.

Beyond the level meadows of Val di Fum rose the massive peak of the Carè Alto, on this side an impos-

sible precipice. But otherwise the view was limited, and we readily decided to add the Monte del Castello to our day's work. A most convenient goat-path, skirting the roots of the rock-teeth, brought us to the edge of the ice. The glacier was steep and slippery, and only just manageable without steps. The top proved a double-crested ridge of loose granite boulders. On the further and slightly lower point was a wooden cross, planted probably by some shepherd from the Val del Leno, the glen on the southern flank of the mountain. It would be easy to climb Monte del Castello from the level of Lago d'Arno and to descend by this valley to Boazze; and the route is recommended to mountaineers who already know Val di Fum. In itself, Monte Castello is, it must be confessed, a very inferior peak. It does not reach 10,000 feet, and it is out-topped by a southern outlier, probably Monte Frerone. But as a view-point it has merits. The long line of glaciers and peaks between the Adamello and the Carè Alto presents an imposing appearance. From the opposite horizons the Schreckhorn and Cimon della Pala, a worthy pair, exchange greetings. The Grand Paradis is also in sight; but too many famous and familiar forms are conspicuous by their absence, and one finds oneself longing for the extra 1,000 feet of height which would sink half the subordinate ridges and give true greatness its proper place.

We returned to the pass, whence a short zigzag leads down to the pasturage and brilliantly blue lakelet known as the Alpe and Lago di Caf. A broken hillside, on which scattered pines make foregrounds for a picturesque view of the Carè Alto, the prominent peak of all this country, slopes down upon the valley at the

point where the torrent of Val di Fum first leaves the level and plunges into a narrow gorge.

Val di Fum is said to be a corruption of Val dei Fini, a name due to the ridge on its west being the limit between the territories of Trent and Brescia. It is a broad, level meadow some eight miles long, valuable as pasturage, and as such a subject of contention in former times. The highest alp is known as the Coel dei Vighi, from its former possessors, the commune of Vigo in Val Rendena, who drove their cows thither by a paved track leading over a pass from Val San Valentino. Over the door of the principal châlet of a lower alp is the inscription—

1656 A. d. 18 L . . . . o,

which is read '1656 addì 18 Luglio,' and records what a local writer with reason calls a 'fatto luttuosissimo.'

Then, as now, the commune of Duone were in possession of the pasturage. The Cedegolans, however, imagined themselves to have a better claim to it. With some brutality they proceeded to enforce their supposed rights by bursting in a body on the châlets, suffocating the seven shepherds in the large caldron, and cutting the legs of all the herd. After this story we no longer wondered at the greed and depravity of the modern villagers, the descendants of these ruffians. The claim so iniquitously enforced does not seem to have been practically known in recent times, but a strong tradition of it must have lingered to induce the Austrian Engineers to give the Val di Fum to Lombardy on their large map.

As usual in this part of the Alps we scarcely reach the valley before meeting a fine waterfall. At first the

gorge descends in steps, separated by swampy platforms; lower down, its fall becomes more regular, gradually steepening as it approaches Boazze. The ground is broken and rugged, and the path until recent improvements must have been very bad. The Chiese is a noble torrent, green and clear despite its glacier birth, and a perpetual delight to the eyes, whether it leaps in white foam over some ash-hung crag or swirls in pure eddies in a bubbling caldron.

Boazze, a sawmill and a châlet, stands in a sharp angle under wooded cliffs. The houses are built, like villages in the Northern Caucasus, of huge, red, unsmoothed pine-trunks. The woodcutters have amused their leisure by painting imaginative titles over the various doors. Here we read 'Cafè e Billiardo,' there 'Sala di Recreazione,' or 'Buvetta.' But the thirsty traveller must not be deluded thereby into expecting anything but a glass of the very roughest of country wine.

It is a long but very beautiful three hours' walk down Val Daone to the high-road at Pieve di Bono. The mountains are not so high as those which surround Val di Genova, but they are rich in colour and picturesque in form. There are steep steps, down which the river thunders in sheets of foam, level meadow expanses, tall cliffs fringed with graceful foliage. Side-glens break through the walls on either hand, and give glimpses into an upper land of lawns and pines, from which we are being rapidly carried away towards hillsides clothed with walnuts and chestnuts and all green Italian things. Some two hours from Boazze the Chiese is left to fight its own way out through a deep ravine, and the road takes an upward inclination. On

a warm afternoon one is disposed to feel strongly the egotism of the Daonians in requiring everybody to pass through their high-perched village. Although they may own the whole valley, a short cut through the vineyards would have been, one fancies, a harmless concession to public convenience.

The village overlooks a wide basin, clothed in vineyards and studded with castles and churches. A long road circling from hamlet to hamlet plunges at last upon Pieve di Bono, a double row of houses lying in the bottom along either side of the high-road. A country inn offers rest and refreshment to those who are unwilling or unable to get a carriage and push on for Tione or Condino.

Here we enter fairly on the valleys of the Giudicaria, so called in witness of certain rights early granted to the inhabitants by the Bishops of Trent. This mountain region has little in common with the Swiss Alps. The low elevation of the valleys, their sunny exposure, and the gentle slope of their hillsides, give the scenery an air of richness rarely found at the very base of great snow-mountains. The frequent and gay-looking villages, the woods of chestnuts, the knots of walnut-trees, the great fields of yellow-podded maize, the luxuriant vines and orchards, have the charm which the spontaneous bounty and colour of southern nature always exercise on the native of the more reserved and sober North. No contrast could be at once more sudden and more welcome than that offered by these softer landscapes to the eye fresh from the rugged granite of the Adamello chain.

Life here, it is evident, is not the hard struggle with a stubborn and grudging nature of the peasant of Uri

or the Upper Engadine. Corn and wine grow at every man's door, and the mountains offer abundant timber and pasturage.

There remains, it is true, sufficient call for energy: torrents to be embanked, hillsides to be terraced, gorges to be pierced by high-roads. But all this lies well within the powers of a population which unites in some degree German industry with Italian grace. Massive dykes stem the stream and protect the water-meadows of Pinzolo; one of the finest roads in Europe, built entirely at the cost of the neighbouring 'communes,' traverses the two great gorges of the Sarca. Here we see no squalor, none of that sufferance of decay and ruin in whatever is old which amongst southern Europeans as well as Orientals is often found united with lavish expenditure on what is new.

The exceptional wellbeing and intelligence of the people is no doubt to some extent referable to the physical features of their country. The Northern Alps seem to have been more or less laid out according to rule; valley is severed from valley by lofty and abrupt ridges; thus isolation and seclusion are enforced on the mountain communities. Here one can imagine that nature first planned a rolling hill-country and put in the mountains as an afterthought, planting them here and there at haphazard in isolated masses. Intercourse is thus rendered easy, for the heads of the valleys are often rolling pasturages. It is in fact rather the lower gorges than the crests of the hills which sever the different districts. Val Rendena can always go to Val di Sole or Val Buona; the defile of the Sarca has been but lately pierced.

Moreover, whatever may be the value of Mr. Ruskin's

remarks on the moral influence of granite, there can be no doubt of its material advantages, and some of the orderly appearance of Val Rendena is certainly due to its geology. The clean grey stone of the Adamello is ever at hand in the form of erratic boulders, and is found useful for every purpose, from a bell-tower or a dyke to a curbstone or a vine-prop.

The road which runs through Pieve di Buono leads northwards over a low pass, protected by several forts, to Tione, southwards past the shores of Lago d'Idro to Salo or Brescia. But a more tempting branch turns suddenly east and mounts through the fine gorge of Val Ampola, the scene of Garibaldi's solitary success in 1866, to marshy uplands, whence it descends on the still basin of Lago di Ledro, a Cumberland tarn as far as hill-shapes go, but girt round with all the warmth and colour of Italy. The landscape is imbued with cheerful sweetness, but without any pretence to mountain sublimity. The little 'pension' lately opened at Pieve di Ledro may, however, well detain for a few days those who can dispense for a time with snow and wild crags and find satisfaction in more homely beauties.

It is a country for strolls, not for expeditions, for idle rambles over the forested hillsides among the tall alders and untamed hedgerows which fringe the lake, or along the banks of the delicious stream which flows from it, dancing down between the boles of chestnuts and vine-trellises until under a spreading fig-tree it makes a last, bold, green leap into the broad waters of the Lago di Garda.

The air at Ledro is already, after the mountains, soft and warm, and the 2,000 feet of descent to Riva are a surprise. The road runs near the torrent through

a narrow glen, between vineyards, mulberries, fig-orchards, and villages, in September a very Alcinous' garden of ripeness.

'Suddenly the verdure ceases on the brink of the great mural precipice which overhangs the upper end of Lago di Garda. After several zigzags the road boldly turns on to the face of the rock. The descent to Riva is henceforth a mere groove blasted out of a smooth perpendicular cliff. Deep below lie the dark waters, flecked by white birdlike sails flying southwards before the morning breeze; opposite is the broad crest of Monte Baldo rising above an olive-fringed shore. The horses trot swiftly in and out of the tunnels and round the slow bullock-waggons creaking heavily up to the hills. Riva bursts suddenly into view, a line of bright-coloured houses and mediæval towers crowded in between the lake, red cactus-spotted cliffs, and a wealth of olive-gardens, orchards and cane-brakes—the most southern scene north of Naples.

But before the latter half of September Riva is too hot to linger in. Delicious as is an evening spent in the inn garden, where supper is served under a trellis overlooking the moonlit lake, it scarcely makes up the second time for a night spent in vain resistance to the assaults of mosquitoes. It is best to return to the mountains which are still so near at hand.

The river, which here enters the lake, will be our guide back to the snows. No stream in Europe can boast a more varied or splendid youth than the unknown Sarca, famous in its smooth-flowing old age, when it issues again from Lago di Garda, under the new name of Mincio. It is only necessary to look for a moment at the map to see what vicissitudes the Sarca

encounters, and what struggles it has to go through. One is tempted to imagine that after Nature had once settled the Alpine streams of this region in their proper and comfortable beds she gave the whole country a rough squeeze, heaving up a hill here, making a huge split there, and turning everything topsy-turvy. The Adige has, I fancy, been cheated somehow out of the Lago di Garda. The Sarca clearly ought to have joined the Chiese, and flowed down into Lago d'Idro. There is something very unnatural about the eastward reach from Tione, even before one knows how prodigious a feat in hill-splitting it really is.[1]

Thanks, however, to its singular course, the scenery along the banks of the Sarca is extraordinarily varied. Roughly speaking, the river's progress may be divided into four great stages. The first, beginning from the lake, is the Val del Lago, the deep trench which forms the continuation of the Garda basin. Two or three miles through high-walled gardens and vineyards which recall the environs of an eastern city bring us to Arco, lying under a huge castled crag. After leaving behind the broad streets and cypress avenues of the hot-looking town, the drive grows monotonous. The road stretches on through the half-desolate, half-luxuriant valley, from time to time the wheels rattle over pavement, and we pass through the long, gloomy street of some roadside village. The trough is now a wilderness of fallen blocks, the road crosses a bridge, and winds along under great cliffs, which threaten further destruction. Alle

[1] The suggestions made here at haphazard are, I see, seriously supported by Dr. Julius Murstadt in a long article *Ueber die Terraingestaltung in Südwestlichen Tirol* in the last publication of the German Alpine Club, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Alpenvereins*, Band V. Heft 1. 1874.

Sarche, a wayside inn where the road from the Giudicaria joins that from Riva to Trent, is the end of the first stage in our journey.

The valley continues in a straight line, but our river suddenly bursts out of a deep narrow cleft in the wall of rock which has so long overhung us.

The road first climbs the cliff-face by two long zigzags, then a terrace cut in a bare bold wall of yellow rock pierces the jaws of the defile. High up on the opposite cliff runs the thin track from Molveno to Castel Toblino. The Sarca, victorious over all obstructions, glides along its narrow bed swiftly, yet smoothly, that Mr. Macgregor, or some one accustomed to those fearful feats in a 'cañon' pictorially recorded in books of North American travel, might find it possible to shoot the defile. When the walls break back a rich valley opens round us. The red crags of the Brenta chain glow for a moment in the north, then the Baths of Comano, a health-resort of local celebrity, is passed, and Stenico and its castle are seen on the right, high-perched on a green brow, holding the keys of the upper valley. The road and the river force their way side by side through an extraordinary cleft, split or cut through the heart of a chain rising on either side 6,000 feet above the gulf. The gorge is greener and less savage than the last, yet on a still more magnificent scale. Slender streams fall in glittering showers from the shelves above, and are carried under or over the road by ingeniously-contrived shafts or galleries.

The rocks at length withdraw, the hills open, and while we ascend gently amongst orchards and rich fields of Indian corn, the Carè Alto suddenly raises his icy horn over the green lower range. We are close to

Tione, and at another of the great turning-points in the Sarca valley.

Tione itself is a thoroughly Italian country town, with dark narrow streets crossed by archways, large houses built round courtyards, low-roofed cafés, and miscellaneous shops. A happy sign of the times may be seen in the conversion of the large barrack outside the town into an elementary school.

Here we are but a short distance from Pieve di Bono, and a two hours' drive would complete the circle. The valleys of the Sarca and Chiese are at this point separated only by a low grassy ridge over which runs a fine high-road, defended, like every road in this country, by a chain of forts, the scene of some of the desultory skirmishes of 1866.

Above Tione the broad open basin which divides the granite and the dolomite is known as Val Rendena. Owing to its peculiar situation between two mountain-chains unconnected at their head, but little is seen of the higher summits, and the landscape is rich and smiling. The road, winding at first high on a wooded hillside, commands a charming view of the upper valley as far as Pinzolo.

Orchards and cornfields separate the rapidly succeeding hamlets, each of which resembles its neighbour. The method of construction in this country is peculiar. The lower stories only, containing the living-rooms, are built of stone; from the top of their walls rise large upright beams supporting an immensely broad roof. The spaces between the beams are not filled up, and the whole edifice has the air of having been begun on too large a scale, and temporarily completed and roofed in. The great upstairs barn is used for the storage of

wood, hay, corn, and all sorts of inflammable dry goods. The roof being also of wood, the lightning finds it easy enough to set the whole mass in a blaze, and fires arising from this cause are of common occurrence. Caresolo, the next village above Pinzolo, was almost completely destroyed in a night-storm during the autumn of 1873.

The openings of two lateral glens, Val di San Valentino and Val di Borzago, are passed in quick succession. Near the latter stands the oldest church in the valley, a square box covered with ruined frescoes, and said to mark the spot of the martyrdom of St. Vigilius, a great local evangeliser and patron saint. Heathenism lingered in this remote region until the eighth century, and two hundred years earlier the first unfortunate missionary was done to death by the inhabitants of Mortaso, who, according to the tradition, finding no stones handy, used their loaves as missiles. For this unlucky piece of barbarity the perpetual hardness of their bread, even at the present day, is said to be a punishment. It is difficult, however, to believe that loaves which could kill a saint can have been very soft to begin with.

To judge from their habits and from the size and number of their churches, the people are still as remarkable for devotion to their religion as they were in pagan days. The wayfarer passing along the valley in the early morning sees a crowd both of men and women streaming out from early mass. In most cases the church seems to have been rebuilt and enlarged in modern times, and a curious effect is often produced by the juxtaposition of the huge whitewashed building and the campanile of the older structure, a little stone

tower with circular-headed apertures, which scarcely reaches to the upper windows of its overgrown companion.

The river is presently crossed, and as we approach the end of our long drive and of the third stage in the Sarca's progress the mouth of Val di Genova comes into sight on the left, and the snows of the Presanella shine for a moment above the lower ridges. We are now within half a mile of Pinzolo, the Grindelwald, or Cortina of this country. But in this chapter I propose to confine myself to the southern approaches to the two groups of the Adamello and the Brenta. The excursions round Pinzolo must be reserved for future pages.

For the moment I shall ask the reader to stop short at the neighbouring village of Giustino, and return with me thence to Trent by a byway which enables us to avoid retracing our steps through Tione.

The walk from Val Rendena to Stenico, through Val d'Algone, is dismissed in the guide-books with a few words of faint praise which raise no expectation of its varied beauty. We left Pinzolo one perfectly cloudless morning, to descend to the shores of Lago di Garda, having for our companion a peasant familiar as the man who, seven years before, had led me up to the Bocca dei Camozzi under pretence of its being the pass to Molveno. To-day he was only engaged as an attendant on the donkey which carried our traps; and it was chiefly to the quadruped's sagacity that we trusted not to be misled.

We soon quitted the high-road down the valley, and climbed a steep pavé past the stations leading to a whitewashed church perched on a knoll amongst the

mossy chestnut-groves. A large village, with a trim granite-edged fountain and a tall campanile, was soon left below. The ascent then became hot and tiresome for a time, where the path perversely left the woods and chose for its zigzags a loose, dusty, shadeless slope. The summit of the Presanella was now in view. The ungainly hump here representing the mountain is the greatest possible contrast to the noble mass which, with its long escarped sides and icy pinnacles, towers above the Tonale road. The Grivola is the only other peak I know of which undergoes so complete a transformation. Above the bare ascent lies a sloping shelf of meadow, dotted with hay-chalets. The path then enters the forest, the thick stems of which shut out all distant view. Suddenly they open and leave room for a smooth level glade: shut round by a green wall of pines, it is a place where an altar to Pan may have risen out of the mossy sward, and shepherds have held their sylvan revelries. This 'leafy pleasantness' is the top of the ridge known by the poetical name of the Pra Fiori. Behind us the icy comb of the Carè Alto gleamed through the branches; in front the massive form of a dolomite peak towered over the tree-tops. Bearing to the left, and descending very slightly from the pass, we came in a few minutes to a grassy brow adorned with beech-trees. A more beautiful site is hardly to be found; and here, with one consent, we built our ideal Alpine chalet.

Below us lay the smooth level of the Val d'Algone; on one side rose the bare, torn, and fretted face of a great dolomite, surrounded by lower ridges scarcely less precipitous, but clothed in green wherever trees or herb-

age could take root. Towards the south the distant hills beyond the Sarca waved in gradations of purple and blue through the shimmer of the Italian sunshine.

A short zigzag through thick copses took us down to the meadows. The large solitary building in their midst is a glass manufactory. At this point a good car-road begins, which, branching lower down, leads either to Tione or Stenico.

The loftier dolomites were soon lost to view behind a bend in the valley, and the road plunged down a deep and narrow glen between banks of nodding cyclamens, bold crags, and the greenest of green hillsides. About two hours' walk from the glass manufactory the gorge of the Sarca opened in front, and the road to Stenico, leaving the stream to fall into it, wound at a level round the face of perpendicular cliffs. Tione and its village-dotted valley were seen for a few moments before our backs were turned to them, and we fairly entered the gorge of the Sarca. The high-road and river thread side by side the intricacies of the great cleft; our way lay along a shelf blasted out of the cliffs a thousand feet above them. The rays of a midday sun streamed full upon us from an unclouded heaven, and every rock reflected back the glow of light and heat. Notwithstanding, we walked briskly on, for the castle of Stenico was full in view and scarcely a mile distant. Before reaching it we had to make the circuit of a gorge. From the hot golden rocks overhead a great fountain burst forth and poured down in a cool cascade, the waters of which were soon captured in channels and spread amongst terraced orchards and fig gardens,

green—not as we know greenness—but with the vivid colour of Broussa or Damascus. Under the shade of the picturesque old covered bridge which crosses the stream, we halted for a few minutes to admire a view almost unique in my Alpine experience. Close beside us stood the castle of Stenico, perched high on a crag, commanding on one side the entrance to the gorge, overlooking on the other a wide sunny basin, girt by verdant ridges compared to which the shores of Como are bare and brown. The hollows and lower slopes sparkle with villages, and teem with Indian corn and trailing vines. The hills do not, as in the Northern Alps, rise in continuous ridges, but are broken up into masses of the most romantically beautiful forms. Such may have been the scenery of the fairest portions of Asia Minor before the Mahometan conquest brought desolation upon the land.

A steep car-road connects Stenico with the high-road to Trent and Riva. At Alle Sarche we left the Sarca and our old tracks, and turned sharply to the north. The little pool of Lago Toblino is rendered picturesque by its castle, an old fortified dwelling standing on a peninsula, and defended landwards by crenellated battlements. Beyond the lake a long ascent leads first through luxuriant orchards to Padernione, then through tame scenery to Vezzano, a large country town lying in an upland plain. Another climb brought us to a higher basin, still rich in vines and fig-trees. At its further end we plunged into a ravine. An Austrian fort crowned the hill above us, another was built in the bottom, right across road and stream, a scowling black and yellow-striped dragon of the defile. Rattling over its draw-

bridges, we followed the water for some distance through a narrow cleft, until suddenly the wide valley of the Adige broke on our eyes, backed by rich mountain-slopes. In the centre of the landscape rose the many towers of Trent, a dark ancient city surrounded by a ring of bright modern villas scattered on the neighbouring hills.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRESANELLA AND VAL DI GENOVA.

All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it.—R. Browning.

ENGLISH AND GERMAN MOUNTAINEERS—THE LOMBARD ALPS FROM MONTE ROSA—NOMENCLATURE—GAVIA PASS—PONTE DI LEGNO—TONALE PASS—VERMIGLIO—VAL PRESANELLA—THE PRESANELLA—PASSO DI CROCE—VAL DI GENOVA.

THE races of English and German mountaineers, after making due allowance for the exceptions which there are to every rule, will be found respectively to embody many of the characteristics of the two nations. Our Alpine Clubman affords while in the Alps an example of almost perpetual motion. His motto is taken from Clough—

Each day has got its right to rue,
Each day must put to profit be.

Provided with a congenial friend, and secure in the company of at least one first-rate guide possessed of the skill and knowledge necessary to encounter every obstacle of the snowy Alps, the English mountaineer runs a tilt at half the mountain-tops which lie in his erratic course, meeting on the whole with wonderfully few falls or failures on the way. He dashes from peak to peak, from group to group, even from one end of the Alps to

the other, in the course of a short summer holiday. Exercise in the best of air, a dash of adventure, and a love of nature, not felt the less because it is not always on his tongue, are his chief motives. A little botany, geology, or chartography, may come into his plans, but only by the way and in a secondary place. He is out on a holiday and in a holiday humour. You must not be surprised, therefore, if the instruments with which one of the party has burdened himself give rise to more bad jokes than valuable observations. For the climbers are in capital training, and can afford to laugh uphill—a power which is freely used, even at moments when the peasant who carries the provision sack is appealing audibly to his saints.

On their return home it is with some secret pleasure, though much grumbling, that the leader of the party hurries off in the intervals of other business a ten-page paper for the 'Alpine Journal'—an account probably of the most adventurous of a dozen 'grandes courses,' full of misspellings of local names, and of the patois he talks to his guides, and, as his Tentonic rival would add, 'utterly devoid of serious aim or importance.'

Far different is the scheme and mode of operation of the German mountaineer. To him his summer journey is no holiday, but part of the business of life. He either deliberately selects his 'Excursions-gebiet' in the early spring with a view to do some good work in geology or mapping, or more probably has it selected for him by a committee of his club. About August you will find him seriously at work. While on the march he shows in many little ways his sense of the importance of his task. His coat is decorated with a ribbon bearing on it the badge or decoration of his club. He

carries in his pockets a notebook, ruled in columns, for observations of every conceivable kind, and a supply of printed cards ready to deposit on the heights he aims at. His orbit, however, is a limited one, and he continues to revolve like a satellite, throwing considerable light on the mass to which he is attached, round the Orteler or Maranolata; while his English rival dashes comet-wise, doing little that is immediately useful, from Grindelwald, the sun and centre of the Alpine system, to the Uranian distances of the Terglou. His velocity also is relatively small; 'a German,' as Hawthorne somewhere says, 'requires to refresh nature ten times to any other person's once,' and to accommodate this sluggishness he requires to pass the night on the highest and most uncomfortable spot possible. Yet having slept or frozen—as you may prefer to call it—scarcely 3,000 feet below his peak, he manages somehow to get benighted before reaching the village on its further side. It must in fairness be admitted that this slow rate of motion is often, partially at least, owing to his dependence on the local chamois-hunter. On rocks this worthy may be, and sometimes is, all that fancy paints him; but on snow or ice the terror inherited from unroped generations possesses him. At the first ice-rift an inch wide, or at a gentle snow-slope of forty-five, he shies obstinately. The foreign mountaineer deserves well of after-comers for the pains with which at his own expense he trains this raw material, and thus founds in every valley a school of native guides. But those who carry about one Almer as an apostle, and associate with him the best local talent, do probably greater good at a less sacrifice to themselves. The party who bring with them a whole train from Zermatt

or Grindelwald are of course wholly selfish, and can lay no claim to have assisted in the progress of Alpine education.

But it is not until our 'klubist' comes home after having spent a third summer in one valley that we realise the full seriousness of his pursuit. No ridiculous mouse of a flippant article is born of his mountains. We have first a solid monograph, properly divided into heads, 'orographical, geological, botanical, and touristical,' and published in the leading geographical magazine of Germany. This is soon followed by a thick volume, printed in luxurious type, and adorned with highly coloured illustrations and a prodigious map, most valuable doubtless, but, alas! to weak English appetites somewhat indigestible.

The foregoing reflections will appear fully justified after any researches into the literature of the Tyrolese Alps in general. But with regard to the Lombard Alps in particular they may seem unfounded. The papers of Lieutenant Payer, their principal German-writing explorer, are as terse as they are full of matter, and several pleasant articles have appeared in the 'Jahrbücher' of the foreign Alpine Clubs on a region which has been strangely neglected by our own countrymen.

The exertions of our German fellow-climbers can, however, scarcely justify the annexation of the district calmly carried out by one of their writers. 'In all our German Alps,' says a learned doctor, 'there is hardly a more forsaken or unknown corner than the Adamello.' 'In unseren Deutschen Alpen!' There is not in the whole Alps a region which is more thoroughly Italian than the mountain-mass of which the Presanella is the highest, the Adamello the most famous, summit. But

it is only fair to the doctor to state his excuse, for the better half of the group lies in Austria, and in 1864 Austria had not yet been pushed out of Germany. The mountains of the Trentino may be still, politically speaking, Austro-Italian Alps; in every other respect they belong entirely to the southern peninsula.

What was written of their deserted condition in 1864 remains true, however, ten years later, at least as far as the mass of English and German travellers is concerned. The splendid gorges which give access from Lago di Garda and Trent to Val Rendena, the roads of the Tonale and the Aprica, are undisturbed by the 'voiturier;' the snow-fields of the Adamello are trampled but once a season by the mountaineer.[1]

To most English frequenters of the Swiss Alps the Lombard snow-peaks are known but as spots on the horizon of the extended view of some mountain-top. It was thus that I first made acquaintance with them.

The full midday glow of a July sun was falling from the dark vapourless vault overhead on to the topmost crags of Monte Rosa. A delicate breeze, or rather air-ripple, lapping softly round the mountain-crest, scarcely tempered the scorching force with which the rays fell through the thin atmosphere. Round us on three sides the thousand-crested Alps swept in a vast semicircle of snow and ice, clustering in bright companies or rang-

[1] A change seems, however, imminent. In 1873 some of the leading inhabitants of Trent and Arco formed themselves into an Alpine Society. Its object is at once to excite in the youth of the Trentino the taste for healthful exercise, and to increase the material prosperity of the mountain valleys by drawing to them some of the abundance of foreign gold which flows so freely into Eastern Switzerland. One of the first consequences of this step has been the establishment of Alpine Inns at Campiglio and San Martino di Castrozza.

ing their snowy heads in sun-tipped lines against the horizon. But we turned our faces mostly to the south, where, beyond the foreshortened foot-hills, and as it seemed at little more than a stone's-throw distance, lay the broad plains of Piedmont and Lombardy. Through a Coan drapery of thin golden haze the great rivers could be seen coursing like veins over the bosom of fair Italy, open to where it was clasped round by the girdle of the far-off Apennine.

As from our tower we watched the lower world, a small cumulus cloud here and there grew into being, some 7,000 feet beneath us, and cast a blue shadow on the distant plain. These cloud-ships would from time to time join company, and, under the favouring influence of some local breeze, set sail for the distant Alps. A few stranded on the lower slopes of Val Sesia, others floated as in a landlocked bay above the deep basin of Macugnaga. A whole fleet sailed away, across the lakes, beyond the village-sprinkled slopes of Val Vigezzo and the crest of Monte Generoso, to find a port in the recesses of a distant range, the first in the east where 'Alp met heaven in snow.'

Where and what, we asked, are these 'silver spear-heads?' The answer given has both before and since satisfied and deluded many enquirers—the Orteler Spitze. But to have named these peaks might, in 1864, have puzzled a better geographer than a Zermatt guide.

Mountains are not born with names; most of them live for ages without them. It is at last often a mere matter of chance and the caprice of an engineer, to what syllables, soft or hideous, they are finally linked. The herdsmen who feed their flocks on the highest pasturages are the authorities to whom the officer in

charge of the Ordnance survey most frequently appeals. These worthy peasants seldom speak anything but a patois scarcely intelligible to their educated fellow-countrymen. Very often, as in the Italian provinces of Austria, they are of a totally different race and speech to their questioners, and confusion of tongues and national antipathy are joined to the fixed notion of every peasant, that all enquiries are connected with taxes, as obstacles to any clear understanding between the parties.

Moreover, the herdsmen have often never thought before of what lies beyond their utmost goat-track. Sometimes driven to despair by cross-questions, they invent, on the spur of the moment, a name drawn from the most obvious characteristic of the peak; hence the crowd and confusion of Corno Rossos and Corno Neros, of Weisshörner and Schwarzhörner. Or they say nothing at all, and leave the map-maker to exercise his own ingenuity.

Again, every mountain has at least two sides, and it is open to the arbitrary discretion of the engineers to prefer the name given on one or the other, which is seldom, if ever, found to be the same.

Until quite recently the two highest peaks of the Lombard Alps were unnamed, and their names are still unknown to many of the people who live beneath them. Two parish priests of Val Camonica, from which the crest of the Adamello is seen for miles closing the distance, had in 1865 never heard of such a mountain. All that they knew was that there was a 'vedretta' somewhere above the summer alps. To them it was quite as remote and inaccessible as any other white cloud, and they had never thought of naming, far less

of approaching, it. The word 'Adamello' is doubtless a creation of the Ordnance survey, derived from Val d'Adame, one of the glens which penetrate nearest to the base of the mountain. The people of Val di Sole called the whole mass of snow and ice—the unattainable ground—on their south, 'Vedretta Presanella.' Strangers are now teaching them to confine the title to the highest peak, and foreign custom is leading to the gradual disuse of the name Cima di Nardis, by which the peak was alone known a few years ago in Val Rendena. The kingship of the Lombard Alps was in 1864 still unconferred between these two rival claimants, the Adamello and Presanella.

On August 23, four weeks after our day on Monte Rosa, we left the Baths of Santa Catarina for the Gavia Pass. The unsettled weather coupled with the reaction after an ascent of the Königsspitze, stolen in a gleam of sunshine on the previous day, would probably in any case have made us ready to take this easy road in place of trying our fortunes over one of the snowy gaps behind the Tresero. But we had a better reason for our want of venturesomeness. It was necessary for us to ascertain the exact position and means of approach to our mountain. For this purpose our maps helped us little, if at all. We had in fact nothing to trust to but the little sheet in the 'Alpine Guide,' compiled on inaccurate authorities, and hiding ignorance under a specious, but to travellers very inconvenient, vagueness.

We knew, it is true, that the Presanella lay on the ridge south of the Tonale Pass, the carriage-road crossing the deep gap which severs the Ortler and Adamello Alps. But whether the path to it opened from the top of that pass or from some point in the

upper Val di Sole we had no means to decide. To cross the Tonale with our eyes open seemed, therefore, the only prudent course.

The Gavia is but a gloomy portal to the beauties of Santa Catarina. The summit is a wild desolate plain, not cheerful even in fine weather, and deadly enough in winter snowstorms. Three rude crosses under a rock mark the spot where as many peasants overtaken by storm sought shelter in vain, and where their bodies were found and buried. Further on the path becomes a street of tombs—a 'Via Appia' of the mountains. Cross succeeds cross, each carved with rude initials and date, varied here and there by a stone pyramid, in the recesses of which, in the place of the usual picture of a virgin or saint, you find a skull and a collection of bones, open to the air and bleached by long exposure. For riders this is the only escape south-eastwards from Santa Catarina; but moderate walkers—ladies even, who do not mind snow—may find a better and brighter path by turning away to the left over the broad shoulders of the Pizzo della Mare, and descending through Val del Monte, and past the dirty bath-houses of Pejo to the upper Val di Sole.[1]

Ponte di Legno is a shabby village, and in 1864 its inn was in character. Since then, however, there has been an improvement, and a very fair country inn now offers a convenient starting-point for travellers who wish to cross the Pisgana Pass, the easiest of those leading to the head of Val di Genova and Pinzolo. During our meal—a banquet of hot water flavoured by pepper, followed by sodden veal,—we were disturbed by the entrance of a venerable personage who seemed

[1] See Appendix C for two routes from Santa Catarina to Val di Sole.

anxious to render us assistance. As he spoke a patois Italian, and was as deaf as he was talkative, his attentions soon became embarrassing. Having listened to a long harangue on the excellence of the road and the inns between us and Trent, we ventured mildly to hint a dislike for roads and to enquire with solicitude about the Presanella. But our protest and enquiries were put aside with equal indifference. Even on the only topic of immediate interest to us, what sort of a place was the inn near the top of the Tonale, we could get no certain information. If age despised the innovating spirit of youth, youth, I am afraid, grew impatient of the resolve 'stare super antiquas vias' of age. When we found that we might as well enquire about the mountains of the moon as the Presanella, we also became deaf, and turned to our veal with such affectation of enthusiasm as that immature viand can command.

Soon after leaving Ponte di Legno the road, a rough cart-track, climbs a wooded hillside by the steepest possible zigzags. The air was hot and steamy, and dark clouds were creeping up Val Camonica. The mists soon enveloped us, all further view was lost, and the rain began to pour as it only can pour among the mountains. Thunder boomed away behind us like heavy artillery, each report followed by a sharp fire of musketry, as the echoes ran along the crags.

The top of the pass is a wide tract of pasture, in the absence of distant view more Scotch than Alpine. At last the road, which, to avoid a swamp, rises higher than the actual gap, began to descend, and tall black and yellow posts, crowned by two-headed eagles, announced the Austrian frontier. The country road of the Italian side suddenly came to an end, and a mili-

tary highway, marked by a long line of granite curb-stones, wound down before us. A deep hollow, the head of Val Vermiglio, presently opened at our feet, and the road, swerving to the left, approached the Tonale Hospice, a massive, modern, whitewashed house. Unfortunately for our comfort it was crowded with labourers, employed on the new fort which the Austrians were then erecting to protect themselves against their neighbours.

The kitchen fire lighted up a picturesque scene. Over the flames hung a huge caldron of polenta, into which two dark-haired girls dashed from time to time some new ingredient, while a hungry crowd of men, young and old, sat round, watching eagerly the progress of their supper. Room was made for us in the chimney-seats, where we steamed in our damp clothes until the crowd had been fed, and some one could find time to give us our meal of potatoes and butter. By the time this was over it was already late, and we were ready to distribute ourselves between the two spare beds which the house afforded, while François went off to join the workmen in the barn. The inmates retired into an inner room, and all was still by nine o'clock, save for the ceaseless patter of the rain. Before five next morning the women came out of their chamber, and from that time there was a constant flow of company backwards and forwards through our room. Seizing on propitious intervals, we dressed in spasms, and, seeing the weather still hopeless, made up our minds to set out at once for the nearest village in Val di Sole, where we might hope to obtain better fare and possibly some further information; for at the Hospice our endeavours to learn anything of the Presanella

had again been fruitless. No one had ever heard of such a mountain. One fact alone was ascertained before leaving. The stream which waters Val di Sole has its highest source in a wild glen at the back of Monte Piscanno, named in the Lombard map Val Presena. This I had believed would lead us up to the Presanella, but through the glimpses of the storm no conspicuous snow-peak appeared in that direction, and it was plain we must look further for our mysterious mountain.

On a projecting knoll, about half way to Vermiglio,[1] stands an Austrian blockhouse, mounting seven guns. It is commanded by many neighbouring heights, but would be of use against a Garibaldian inroad. As we passed it a momentary break revealed a lofty snow-peak at the head of a glen opening immediately opposite.

There at last was the Presanella. A fir-forest clothed the lower slopes: higher up a large glacier spread out its icy skirts. The vision, though sufficient for our purpose, lasted only a few moments. In clear weather the view from this spot must be one of the most picturesque glimpses of a great snow-peak anywhere to be seen from a carriage-pass. Clinging still to the northern slopes of the valley, the road presently entered Pizzano. The first house was the Austrian douane; the second, the inn. We of course gave up our passports, but François, being unprovided, handed the officers his 'livre des voyageurs,' containing his certificate as guide.[2] The Austrian, with much show

[1] Vermiglio, like Primiero, is the name of a group of villages, of which the highest is Pizzano.

[2] This refers to eleven years ago. Proofs of nationality are no longer asked for anywhere in the Alps unless, perhaps, in France, where even a Republican Government finds itself forced to gratify the peculiar passion of the nation for restrictions on liberty of travel by retaining passports for

of sternness, pushed it away contemptuously, and delivered himself in this wise:—'You have no passport. You must go back to your country. At any rate you can enter no further into the Imperial and Royal dominions.' Here was a serious crisis. We felt our only chance was to temporise. 'Very well,' we replied, 'if you must refuse our servant permission to enter Austria, at least there can be no objection to his getting something to eat next door before he returns.' This concession the officers did not deny; and entering the inn we ordered breakfast, and prepared to wait for better weather. A scout was posted outside by the douaniers to prevent François from giving them the slip. In the meantime we of course again enquired after the Presanella, and, almost to our surprise, everyone in Pizzano was acquainted with the name. 'Oh, yes!' said our host, 'a German Herr Professor from Vienna tried the mountain a year or two ago, and found it quite impracticable. The final peak is like the stove in this room, and all ice.' 'Well,' said I, 'but the stove is easy,' and climbed to the top. Staggered by this argument, he offered to bring the man who had accompanied the Viennese Professor in his attempt. In due time a native made his appearance, who satisfied us that he really knew where the mountain was, and could lead us to its foot; which was all we wanted.

The name of our predecessor was at the time unknown to us, but I learnt afterwards[1] that he was Dr.

Frenchmen only. So long as this distinction is maintained, members of other nations are liable to be occasionally required to prove their disqualification for the privilege of carrying about one of the minute descriptions of their own persons, which seem to give our neighbours so much pleasure.

[1] From an article, *Die grösseren Expeditionen in den Oesterreichischen*

von Ruthner, then the Vice-President of the Austrian Alpine Club. From the account given of his attempt it is clear that he followed the same route as ourselves; our Italian in fact led us in his footsteps, up to the saddle at the north-west base of the mountain. His failure to get further was entirely owing to his guides, who, unused to such expeditions, and appalled by the sight of a broken and somewhat steep snow-slope, refused to proceed. The Italian, as our experience proved, was a poor creature, his second guide, Kuenz, though, as we are told, renowned as a keen chamois and bear-hunter, declared to Dr. von Ruthner 'that he had once in his youth descended amongst the wild chasms of the glacier which pours steeply over into Val Cercen, and that he would never do it again.' This descent we subsequently found an admirable spot for a glissade!

Watching from our window the rain, which after a deceitful lull now fell again in torrents, we saw the scout, who was still on duty, in deep converse with a friend. In a few minutes the friend sauntered casually into our room, and enquired our plans with an air of indifference. I assured him that our intention was to climb the Presanella, without thinking it necessary to add—and find a way down the other side of it. His object thus satisfactorily attained, the man soon left us, and no doubt imparted the valuable information to his brother officials, for their demeanour suddenly changed, and one of them told us that they should not object to our guide's accompanying us to the Presanella. We of course expressed ourselves duly thankful for their

Alpen aus dem Jahre 1864, von Dr. Anton von Ruthner, published in Petermann's *Mittheilungen* for 1865.

small mercies, and in fact felt much relieved at this happy issue of a dilemma which might easily have become serious. Soon after three o'clock the clouds grew gradually lighter, the sun struggled through, and patches of blue broke the leaden monotony of the sky. No more watery storms swept down from the Tonale, but a steady northern breeze carried away the vapours, except one or two unfortunates which had sunk so deep into the valley that they could not find the way out again. We hurried our dinner, got together our provisions, and sent the porter to look for a rope—a necessary which we were too young in Alpine travel to have brought with us from England, according to the custom of experienced mountaineers. Vermiglio did not possess a cord more than thirty feet long; but after a good deal of delay some leather thongs were procured, and about 5 P.M. we finally got off, leaving the douaniers to look out at their leisure for our expected return.

Instead of remounting the Tonale road we kept by the side of the river for half-an-hour, until it was joined by the torrent from the lateral glen which we had passed in the morning. A well-made path led up a steep hillside covered with bilberries and Alpine strawberries, and turned some precipitous rocks by picturesque wooden galleries.

After passing a group of charcoal-burners' huts the ascent ceased, and winding round a wooded brow we entered a secluded basin shut in by steep ridges, where the stream rested for a while in its troubled course before plunging into the valley. Far above gleamed the object of our expedition—the long-talked-of, and at last almost-despaired-of Presanella, no longer shrouded

in mist, but sharp cut against the darkening sky. It presented an apparently level wall, turreted at either end; the western tower was of rugged rock, the eastern more massive and snow-clad, rising in the centre to a sharp shining point, evidently the true 'cima' of the mountain.

A flock of Bergamasque sheep were huddled together in our way; disregarding the protests of the shaggy sheep-dog we forced a passage through them, and reached the hut—a rough shelter, half open on one side to the sky.

Pushing back the rude door, we entered a small cabin, looking at first sight like a butcher's shop, for several carcases of departed sheep were hung up to smoke over the smouldering fire. Its occupants were three shepherds, who received us most hospitably, packed away the drying meat, and made room by the fireside. Presently one of them went out with the dog. On enquiring where the man was going so late, we were told that they were obliged to patrol by turns at night to keep off the bears; several were known to be prowling about the mountains, and one had been seen only the previous day. Our hosts took needless pains to assure us that the animals would not enter the chalet, and that there was no occasion for alarm at their vicinity.

As fresh logs were piled on, and the blaze rose higher, a horned monster with a pair of gleaming eyes was seen gazing at us from the upper gloom. It was only a patriarchal goat, stabled in a loft opening on one side into the chalet. Two of us spent the night in a bed of hay, built up on pine-logs; the third lay down with the shepherds among the skins and logs by the

fireside. François scrambled into the loft, where he was welcomed by the old goat, which settled itself beside him. Later in the night the rest of the flock became boisterous, quarrelled with the biped intruder, and expelled him from their abode.

At 3 A.M. the waning moon was still bright enough to guide our steps along the zigzags of a well-marked track leading to the rocky waste, furrowed and polished by glacier action, which lies above the head of the glen. Our porter was very anxious to take us round by the spur on our right dividing Val Presanella and Val Presena, but we preferred a much more direct course over the ice. Although the valley at our feet was already bathed in golden light, the early rays still left cold the snows we were about to enter. The rain of the previous day had frozen over the glacier in a slippery crust, and made every slope into a sort of 'Montagne Russe.' We crept entwise as best we could along cracks, cutting steps when these failed us, until the more level and upper snows were safely if not quickly gained.

We were now at the very foot of the Presanella, and could judge of the nature of the work immediately before us. From the western extremity of the wall which we had seen from below, a ridge receded from us ending towards Val di Genova in a snow-dome. This secondary peak (Monte Gabbiol) with the rock turret at the angle (the Piccola Presanella) and the sharp eastern crest, probably make up the three summits to which the mass owes a local name, 'Il Triplice.' The only route open to us seemed to be to cross the lowest point in the ridge between the Monte Gabbiol and the Piccola Presanella, and then gain the eastern or highest peak by

the back of the snow-wall. Dr. von Ruthner's Italian scouted the idea. 'Then,' said François, 'we must cut steps up the face of the wall.' This proposal struck our native with horror, and he protested against it as 'Molto molto impossibile!' His idea of the impossible was evidently somewhat vague, and not founded on experience. We stuck therefore to our first plan, and, walking briskly up the glacier, reached in half-an-hour a gap at its head overlooking the ice-fields which enclose Val di Genova. At this point the real attack on the mountain began. Hitherto we had only been making for a pass.

The ascent now led us over steep slopes of snow, broken by great rifts and icicle-fringed vaults, none of which, however, were continuous enough to cause any difficulty. Often a few steps had to be cut, but the delay was pleasantly spent in studying the glorious view already spread out behind us. In the foreground lay the unknown glacier-fields of the Adamello; the Ortoler and Bernina ranges rose in the middle distance; on the horizon glowed Monte Rosa and the Saasgrat. Even these were not the furthest objects in view, for I distinctly recognised the Gruian peaks melting into the saffron sky.

The deep moat crossed, a dozen steps had to be cut up an ice-bank; then, after climbing over an awkward boulder, we reached the ridge. Great was the anxiety as to what would be seen on the other side, for on the steepness of the back of the wall between us and the final peak our success hung. Great in proportion was the satisfaction of those below, when, as his head rose above the rocks, François shouted, 'Bien; tout est facile!'

The semicircle enclosed between the three summits of the Presanella was filled by the snow-fields of an extensive glacier which flowed away to the south-east. The snow rose nearly to the level of the lowest point of the crest connecting the Piccola Presanella and the highest peak. We quickly passed under the former, and found ourselves standing on the summit of the wall we had gazed up at the previous evening.

We now looked down upon the shepherds' hut and the Tonale road, where the Austrian blockhouse and its constructors seen through the glasses appeared like a diminutive beehive. A coping of fresh snow overhung the edge of the wall; this we dislodged with our alpenstocks, sending it whirling down 1,000 feet upon the glacier beneath.

Our hopes of immediate success now met with one of those checks, so frequent in the Alps, which test most severely the moral endurance needed, much more than physical strength, in a good mountaineer. The crest suddenly turned into hard ice; each step had to be won patiently by the axe. Careless or inefficient work might have led to an awkward tumble; an attempt such as a tyro would probably have made to make use of the snow coping would have inevitably resulted in sudden disaster. In such positions amateurs without guides most often fail. It is rare to find a party of whom some member will not utter an impatient exclamation, or suggest some tempting, but unwise, expedient to gain time; it is rarer still to find a leader who will act as a good guide invariably does—refuse to pay the slightest heed to such murmurs in his rear. Yet if he listens to them he will learn sooner

or later the truth of a line which ought to be emblazoned as a text over every A. C.'s mantelpiece, 'Hasty climbers oft do fall.'

We advanced but slowly along our laboured way. Once the porter was sent to the front, but after cutting some half-dozen steps he retired again of his own accord to the rear, informing us, in passing, that 'he could do no more.' He accordingly reserved all his strength for frequent ejaculations respecting the impossibility of attaining the top under at least eight hours! François had all the work to do, and for the next two hours and a half he did it manfully. Hack! hack! went the axe, till a step was hewn out; then with a final flourish the loose ice was cleared off, and the process began again. At last the wearisome task was done, and we all stepped gladly on to a little snow-platform, about half of which was occupied by a huge cup-shaped crevasse. The final peak alone now remained to be conquered. 'Encore dix pas seulement,' said François, and he hacked away as if it was his first step. We cut across a steep ice-slope, and in five minutes stood upon some broken rocks which ran up the southern face of the mountain. Here we had to wriggle across an awkward boulder; and our porter, who had insisted on throwing off the rope, was fain to be re-attached. By a vigorous haul we cut short his hesitation and drew him halfway over, but there he stuck clinging on to the rock with all his limbs spread out in different directions, like a distressed starfish. At last some one went back and stretched out a helping hand; then, aggravated by the delay, we made a rush at the last rocks, and in a few moments were treading down the virgin snows at which we had so long and wistfully

looked up. The actual top was a snow-crest lying as a cap on the brow of the cliff which faces Val di Sole. The ascent from the hut had taken us eight hours—a long time for a mountain of only 11,688 feet.

As soon as the first excitement of victory was over we began to look with interest at the new mountain region spread at our feet. The central mass of the Adamello was for the first time before me in such nearness and completeness as to allow of a ready insight into, and understanding of, its character. It is a huge block, large enough to supply materials for half-a-dozen fine mountains. But it is in fact only one. For a length and breadth of many miles the ground never falls below 9,500 feet. The vast central snow-field feeds glaciers pouring to every point of the compass. The highest peaks, such as the Carè Alto and Adamello, are merely slight elevations of the rim of this uplifted plain. Seen from within they are mere hummocks; from without they are very noble mountains falling in great precipices towards the wild glacier-closed glens which run up to their feet.

Imagine an enormous white cloth unevenly laid upon a table, and its shining skirts hanging over here and there between the dark massive supports. The reader, if he will excuse so humble a comparison, may thereby form a better idea of the general aspect of the snow-plains, the rocky buttresses, and overhanging glaciers of the Adamello as they now met our view.

It was clear that the descent of the Nardis Glacier, leading in a direct line to Pinzolo, was perfectly easy, and we half regretted having left our goods on the pass.

Returning a few paces to the highest rocks we spent an hour of pleasant idleness, only broken by

the duty of building a cairn in which to ensconce a gigantic water-bottle charged with our cards. About three weeks later our representative received a visitor, Lieut. Julius Payer,[1] an Austrian officer whose name has since become familiar to the English public as the leader of a North Pole expedition, had, unknown to us, been spending the summer in exploring the peaks round Val di Genova. The Presanella, owing partly to the difficulties he found with his native guides, was left to the last, and consequently, when its summit was at length reached, the astonished mountaineers were greeted, not by a maiden peak, but by a fine stoneman.

The staircase which had taken three hours and a half to hew was readily run down in forty-five minutes. On the pass, hereafter to be known as the Passo di Cercen, we dismissed our hunter, with materials for many a long story, and our kindest regards to the douaniers.

A steep, short glacier fell away from our feet into Val di Genova. The ice was at first much fissured, but by bearing towards the rocks on the right we found a slope clear from crevasses and favourable to a long glissade. Soon afterwards we left the glacier, and descended through a gully and over some rough ground till, reaching a lower range of cliffs, we bore well to the left, and discovered a faint track which led us down through underwood to the side of the stream and the first hut. From this point there is a noble view of the Adamello, with the Mandron and Lobbia glaciers[2]

[1] Lieut. Payer's pamphlet *Die Adamello-Presanella Alpen*, Petermann's *Mittheilungen, Ergänzungsheft*, No. 17, Gotha, J. Perthes, 1865, is a very valuable contribution to the orography of the group he describes.

[2] I follow Lieutenant Payer's nomenclature, as it has been adopted in

shooting out their icy tongues over the rocks at the head of the valley. Hence we dropped down by a good path into the bottom of Val di Genova, which was reached in two hours from the pass.

Although the description of Mr. Ball relieves me from the responsibility of standing sponsor for this wonderful valley, I cannot pass over without a tribute the long, yet though now four times trodden, never wearisome twelve miles which separate the sources of the Sarca above the Bedole Alp from Pinzolo, the first village on its banks.

The Val di Genova leaves behind it an impression as vivid and lasting as any of the more famous scenes of the Alps or the Pyrenees. It is in one aspect a trench cut 8,000 feet deep between the opposite masses of the Adamello and Presanella. From another and perhaps truer point of view it is a winding staircase leading by a succession of abrupt flights and level landings from the low-lying Val Rendena to the crowning heights of the Adamello itself. In the valley there are four such flights or steps, locally called 'scale,' each the cause of a noble waterfall; the fifth step closes the valley proper, and the fall that pours over it is of ice, the flashing tongue of the great Mandron Glacier. The last step divides the glacier from the snow region, and is partially smoothed out by the vast frozen masses which slide over it, as a rapid is concealed by a swollen flood. Besides the falls of the Sarca in the bottom of the valley, the meltings of two great ice-fields have to find a way down its precipitous sides.

Hence Nature has here a great opportunity for a

the Alpine Club map. Mr. Ball prefers the name of Bedole Glacier for the Mandron Glacier, and of Mataretto Glacier for the Lobbia Glacier.

Lobbia Gl.

HEAD OF VAL DI GENOVA

display of waterfalls, a branch of landscape gardening in which as a rule she seems strangely chary of exerting her powers. The skill with which a large body of water manages to descend a mountain side at an extremely high angle without dashing itself anywhere to pieces is, I fancy, often extremely provoking to the tourist in search of a sensation.

In the Adamello country, however, the greediest sightseer will be satisfied. For 'grandes eaux' Val di Genova is the Versailles of North Italy. Besides three first-rate falls of the Sarca itself, there are two more of the torrents draining the glaciers of Nardis and Lares. But I am in danger of falling into a numerical, or auctioneer's catalogue, style of description, by which no justice can be done to the manifold charms of rock, wood, and water, which await the wanderer in this forgotten valley. We must return to the Bedole Alp and endeavour to sketch some two or three of the splendid surprises of the path to Pinzolo.

We entered the valley above its highest step on the level where the Sarca first gathers up its new-born strength. A smooth meadow-foreground, alive with cattle, spread between low pine-clad knolls from under the shelter of which issued a thin column of smoke, showing the whereabouts of the châlets. Close at hand two great glaciers poured their icy ruin into the pastoral scene, which was encompassed on all sides by bare or wooded cliffs, most savage in the direction of the river's course, where the vast outworks of the Presanella, keen granite ridges, saw the sky with their solid pinnacles.

After a few hundred yards of level we came to the brink of what we could hardly tell. The grey water which had been flowing at our side dropped suddenly out

of sight amidst a mighty roar. A slender and hazardous bridge of a single log crossed the stream on the brink of the precipice.

From it, if your head is steady enough, you may watch the waters as they leap in solid sheets into the air and disappear amidst the foam-cloud, until a growing impulse to join in their mad motion warns you to regain the bank. It is as well to remain content with this impression. But those who wish to see more may easily push their way through a tangle of pine and thick undergrowth by tracks best known to the cattle who come here to bathe themselves in the cool spray. From below the fall is still noble, but it is no longer a mystery. The plunge into the infinite has become only the first step in life.

A second plain is covered with lawn-like turf or bilberry-carpeted woodland; here and there stand shepherds' huts, locally known as 'malghe,' built of ruddy unsmoothed fir-logs. Overhead tower the sheer buttresses of the Presanella, so lofty that it seemed incredible how a few hours ago we had been higher than the highest of these soaring cliffs. At the next 'scala' the foot traveller should cross by a bridge to the right bank in order to pass in front of the second Saren fall, where the river, caught midway by a bluff of rock, is shivered into a wide-spreading veil, in which the bright water-drops chase one another in recurrent waves over the bosses of the crag.

The succeeding plain is shorter and more broken. At its lower end are some saw-mills and a group of huts, the summer residence of a worthy called Fantoma, once employed as a guide by Lieut. Payer, a great talker, and, by his own account, still greater Nimrod, having slain to his own gun seventeen bears and over

three hundred chamois. Here we came on another fall of the Sarca, or rather a succession of leaps imbedded in a deep cleft crossed by bold bridges, and lit up by the scarlet berries of the mountain ash. High upon the right an unchanging cloud hangs on the mountain side where the Lares torrent hurries down to the valley. A cart-road made for the saw-mills now traverses a flat stony tract where the river for the first time breaks loose and devastates the meadows, and huge blocks, fallen from scars in the cliff-faces above, lie beside the track. Sheltered from the spray-shower between two of these we paused to admire the last great cascade, that of the Nardis, which comes shooting and shivering out of the sky down almost upon our heads in a double column. Seen once in June, when the snows were melting, it seemed to me the most beautiful of Alpine water-showers.

Some distance further, on the verge of the last descent into Val Rendena, we reached, as evening fell, the old church of Charlemagne, and looked down for the first time over the softer landscape and sylvan slopes of the lower valley. The fading light below brought out on the hillsides the delicate shades of green lost in the full blaze of the noonday sun, while high up in air the red cliffs of the Brenta, glowing with the last rays of sunset, seemed unearthly enough to form part of the poet's palace of Hyperion which,

> Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold
> And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisques,
> Glared a blood red through all its thousand courts,
> Arches and domes and fiery galleries.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ADAMELLO AND CARÈ ALTO.

Close to the sun in lonely lands
Ring'd with the azure world he stands.—TENNYSON.

A TYROLESE PORTER—THE BRENTA ALPS—THE ADAMELLO—VAL MILLER—VAL DI MALGA—VAL DI BORZAGO—THE CARÈ ALTO—A HIGH-ALPINE ROUTE—PASSO DI MANDRON—VAL D'AVIO.

A YEAR after the ascent of the Presanella I again found myself at the head of Val di Genova, one of a formidable party of seven, including two Swiss guides and a Tyrolese porter. Gutmann was something of a character. A native of Berchtesgaden, in the Bavarian Tyrol, he had been picked up there a year before by Mr. Tuckett, and carried on through the northern valleys of the Venetian Alps. He had then proved an amusing and good-tempered companion, and was in consequence engaged a second time to take the place of the chance peasant whom one picks up to carry a knapsack—an individual whose obstinate prejudice against ropes, and glaciers, and snow-work generally, is, or used to be, a source of difficulty in out-of-the-way parts of the Alps.

Gutmann was a well-grown, fine-looking young man of twenty-five, and became well his national costume, which he always wore. In his short coat and

knee-breeches, with his half-bare legs and tall green hat and feather, he might have stepped at once on to any operatic stage. From his watch-chain hung a bundle of silver-mounted charms; true hunter's trophies—teeth of chamois and marmot, and claws of the 'lammergeier.' He was a great dandy, and amongst the other unexpected articles which tumbled out of the large blue bag slung across his back was a brush for his whiskers and a shaving-glass. Naturally the effect on his complexion of the first snow-day quite horrified our Adonis. On the next occasion he came down in the morning with his face completely plastered over with a mixture of soot and tallow, when his appearance, if no longer 'a thing of beauty,' became a 'joy for ever' to the guides, whose talent for small jokes found abundant scope for exercise at the porter's expense.

But in the evening and after a good wash in a wayside fountain, Gutmann had his revenge. Then he was to be seen in the Gaststube, the centre of an admiring crowd, fresh and blooming enough to win the heart of the coyest Phillis—a kind of conquest on which I fear he set far greater store than on the victories over snowy maidens won during the day. The tales of his prowess which at such moments he was heard to recount gave us frequent amusement. For though below the snow-line an active walker, above it Gutmann became a changed man. Once on ice, the quips and cranks with which he usually overflowed gave place to the most dismal of groans. He walked daintily, like a cat afraid of wetting its feet, at slippery corners detained us twice as long as anybody else, and when the top was gained habitually lay down at once and fell asleep.

At home our companion was by profession a poacher

—a precarious means of livelihood in a district where the mountains are strictly preserved for Bavarian royalty, and the keepers fire on any man seen carrying a gun. A month before he joined us his brother had had a piece of one of his calves shot away, and he had himself been slightly wounded on more than one occasion. During the past winter he had found for a few months a less hazardous employment in cutting wood near one of the Bavarian lakes, but had gone back in spring to the old and irresistible pursuit, from which he was only called away by our summons. He did not, however, return to it—at any rate for long; before the next summer he had emigrated to America, probably with the money gained in our service, a larger sum than he had ever before had at his disposal.

The position of the Bedole Alp as it is seen in descending from the Presanella has been described in the last chapter. Beyond the final bend in Val di Genova lies a level plain enclosed by sheer granite cliffs. I know few spots so completely secluded from the outer world. Dreaming away the afternoon hours on a pine-clad knoll among the outskirts of the Venezia forest, which stretches[1] for a mile to the foot of the great glaciers, a wanderer easily fancies himself in one of the lost valleys of legend where the people live in a bygone age, where pastoral life is a reality, and the nineteenth century a yet undreamt dream.

The herdsmen were hospitably inclined, but the accommodation they had to offer was of the roughest. By means of a ladder we scaled our bedroom, a platform of hay so narrow that the slightest roll would

[1] I ought, perhaps, to say 'stretched.' The axe has laid low much of it during the past ten years.

have ended in a tumble on to the heap of pails twelve feet below. The time has scarcely yet come for a small mountain-inn on this spot to be rendered profitable, but it would be a step in the right direction and a great boon to travellers if the Trentine Alpine Club would incite or assist the herdsmen to build a 'spare' chalet and furnish it with beds and cooking materials. Romantic in its situation, the Bedole Alp is also the true centre of the district. From it active travellers might ascend in the day the Adamello, Presanella, or Carè Alto, or cross by glacier passes into Val di Fum or Val Saviore, to Edolo by the Val di Malga, to Ponte di Legno, or to the Val di Sole.

A perfect morning relieved our spirits from the otherwise depressing influence of climbing a rough track in the dark.

The head of Val di Genova is almost too perfect a 'cul de sac' for the mountaineer who wants to get higher. Some way up or by the side of the icefall of the Lobbia Glacier is yet to be found, but is probably possible. The upper regions of the Mandron Glacier, the Adamello, and all the passes to Val Camonica are, except in one place, completely cut off by the continuous cliffs which hem in the valley.

To reach the upper pasturages and the hut of Mandron, sometimes very needlessly used as night-quarters by foreign climbers, it is necessary to turn northwards and hit on a rough track which finds a way up the crags near a slender waterfall. A herdsman with a lantern guided us up the steepest part of the ascent, and was then sent back, leaving us and our Swiss guides to find our own way, a task to which we were all pretty well accustomed.

We now turned again sharply southwards, making for the side of the Mandron Glacier. A considerable extent of ground had to be traversed, rough and boulder-strewn, yet bright with flowers. Amongst them was a profusion of 'Edelweiss,' a plant which may doubtless be found in dangerous positions, but is quite as often plucked where cows might crop it. But ground safe for cows is not always safe for amateur botanists in high-heeled and nailless boots.

We climbed steadily the slopes of snow on the (true) left bank of the ice. From the top of the last we looked over a smooth expanse of gloriously bright snow-field, bounded on the west by a range of peaks, and on the east by a long white crest, terminating in the rock peak of La Lobbia, first ascended by Von Sonklar. The Presanella, on this side massive and less graceful than from the north, closed the backward view. The still frost-bound surface was crisp and crackling under our feet, and we made quick progress, passing the gap on our right through which eight years afterwards I crossed into Val d'Avio. A shapely snow-peak at the head of the glacier was at first sight assumed to be our mountain, but a reference to the map saved us from repeating Payer's mistake, and convinced us that this was the Corno Bianco, and that the Adamello must be further round to the right. Accordingly after reaching the slightly higher plain whence the ice falls also into the upper branches of Val Saviore, we rounded the snow-peak, and ascended slopes in its rear which brought us up to the highest reservoir of all, a snow-basin sloping downwards from the foot of a conical peak, a steeper but scarcely loftier Cima di Jazi, the Adamello itself. On gaining the ridge at its eastern base we looked down

F. F. Tuckett del.

FROM THE ADAMELLO,

Looking East over the Upper Glaciers

precipices on to the head of Val d'Avio and its lake. The side of the peak above us was steep, but thanks to some rocks and the splendid condition of the snow it took but twenty minutes to gain the summit, a snow-crest some fifty yards long rising at either extremity, the north-eastern point being the highest.

From its position as an outlier of the great chain, we had expected much from the Adamello, and now we were not disappointed. The morning had held good to its promise and brought forth one of those golden mid-summer days which, as some think, are best spent on the tops of mountains.

Far away in the east we could trace the line of our wanderings from their very commencement. There were the dolomite peaks of Primiero, a little further the Marmolata, Pelmo, and the pyramidal Antelao; then the eye had only to leap the broad gap of the Pusterthal to run over the Tauern from the Ankogel (above Gastein) to the Brenner. The Glockner was as well defined as from Heiligen Blut, only that its snows were tinted an exquisite rose colour, as if they had made prisoner of a sunset. The Orteler and Bernina, from which we were nearly equidistant, made a fine show of snow and ice; still closer at hand we surveyed the great snow-fields of our own group, overlooked by our two rivals, the Presanella and Carè Alto. To the south lay a labyrinth of granite peaks and ridges, separating the many glens which ran up from Val Camonica. This great valley was visible for miles, and the eye rested with pleasure on its fields of Indian corn and chestnut woods, until led on by the white thread of road to the blue waters of Lago d'Iseo basking amidst bright green hills. When tired of this prospect we could take

a bird's-eye view of the Val Tellina, a long deep trench of cultivation, heat, and fertility, closed at its lower end by the mountains round the head of Lago di Como. These were crowned by a coronet of snowy peaks, which, so clear was the air, almost seemed part of them, but were in reality the Pennine giants encircling Zermatt. Most notable of all was the splendid pyramid of the Matterhorn, seen in its sharpest aspect, towering immediately over the Weisshorn. In another direction far away across the shoulders of lower hills the wide waters of Lago di Garda glowed like burnished metal beneath the cloudless sunshine, while further still the mounds of Solferino were faintly seen through a haze of heat.

The view was perhaps the most beautiful, though not the most extensive,[1] I have seen from a snowy Alp, and the pleasure of it even in memory must be my excuse for having to some extent recalled its details.

But it is impossible to infuse into a catalogue of names any trace of the colouring of the original. I can only hope to induce some reader sceptical of the beauties of the snow-world to climb one of these Italian Alps for himself. But he must remember that it is not, as some critics of the Alpine Club seem to think, enough to have scaled a peak once or twice under unfavourable conditions in order to be capable and entitled to express an authoritative opinion on the scenery of the upper Alps. Time as well as place is required. One of those days, not rare in a southern summer, must be chosen, when

[1] The widest range of vision I have ever gained was from the Pizzo della Mare in the Ortler group, from which the Ankogel above Wildbad Gastein, and Monte Viso, distant from each other over 400 miles, the Apennines above Bologna, and the hills of the Vorarlberg were visible at the same time.

the mountains are at rest from their task of moisture condensers, and stand basking in the sunshine and well-earned idleness.

At such moments the climber's toil is richly paid. Over his head stretches the pure vault of the sky, below lies a vast expanse of earth; the mountain-top seems poised between the two, a point in the centre of a hollow globe. From the refulgent snows of the neighbouring peak, glittering with such excess of light as to be scarcely endurable, the eye turns for relief to gaze up into the intense colour of the zenith, or wanders over miles of green and countless changes of blue distances to the saffron of the extreme chain which forms the link between earth and heaven.

Surely no one who has enjoyed such a view would deny the beauty of the forms and colours gathered round him. To represent to others the glory of the mountain-tops requires, it is true, either a poet or one of the greatest and rarest landscape painters. But even if these fail, if the scenery of the highest Alps proves altogether unpaintable and indescribable, it may yet be in the highest sense beautiful. The skill of the interpreter cannot be accepted as the measure of that which is to be interpreted, nor can the noble and delightful in nature be made subject to the limitations of art.

But the vision of those hours[1] on a great peak stretches beyond what is actually before the eyes. At

[1] There is an opinion current, based only on the habitual hurry of some mountaineers and the slowness of others, that it is impossible to spend hours on a great peak. On a calm, fine day no pleasanter resting-place can be found, and the time you can pass on the top depends only on the time of day you reach it. I have spent three hours on the Aletschhorn and Monte Rosa with the greatest enjoyment, less than an hour rarely, in decent weather on any peak of over 10,000 feet.

such moments even the dullest soul shares with inarticulate emotion the feelings which poets have put into words for all ages. Our pulses beat in tune with the great pulse of Life which is breathing round us. We lose ourselves and become part of the vast order into the visible presence of which we seem for a brief space to have been translated. On a lesser height, whence some town is seen like a great ant-heap with the black insects hurrying backwards and forwards across its lanes, the insignificance of the human race is often painfully prominent. But here, removed by leagues of snow and ice and a mile or two of sheer height from the rest of our race, no such thought oppresses us. Man is merged in nature, cities have become specks, provinces are spread out like fields, the eye ranges across a kingdom. Through the stillness which fills the upper air the ear seems to catch from time to time some faint echo of

> —— The deep music of the rolling world
> Kindling within the strings of the waved air
> Æolian modulations.

On its lofty standpoint the mind feels in harmony with the soul of the universe, and almost fancies itself to gain a glimpse of its workings.

Seen from the valley the sublimity of the mountain precipice may be due to a sentiment at root akin to terror. Grandeur is there shown in its most overpowering—a Frenchman might say brutal—form by some giant peak towering defiantly skywards, 'remote, serene, and inaccessible,' a chill colossus alien to human life. But on the peak we are conquerors; its terrors are left below and behind us. In our new scale of vision the

Titans gathered in silent session round us are brothers. The masses which appeared from below 'confusedly hurled' have become ordered. The valleys unfold their labyrinths. The rivers, cleansed from all stain of early turbulence in the calm of heaven-reflecting lakes, are seen to set forth, at first gently directed and compelled by the lower hills, for the great plain where each has its own mission of life and bounty to fulfil. We are no longer, like the old-world theologian, frightened into thinking our mountain a monument of man's wickedness and God's anger, or like the modern philosopher, oppressed by the bulk of the giant; we know him in his true character as a

> Factory of river and of rain,
> Link in the Alps' globe-circling chain.

The sense of the sublime excited in us is due not to mere 'extension of space,' but to admiration of the excellence revealed by our larger range of vision. The barren ice-field is seen to water a thousand meadows, the destructive torrent to fertilise a whole province. The evil of the world seems for once contained within the good.

Had Mr. Mill lived a generation later, and wandered upon Tyrolean snows as well as amongst the meadows at their feet,[1] he would probably have hesitated to state so broadly that 'what makes the greater natural phenomena so impressive is simply their vastness,' and that no 'admiration for excellence' enters into the feeling they inspire.

[1] 'J. S. Mill and Tochter,' is a frequent entry in the strangers' books of Tyrolean inns.

So far (except that we had not crossed over the top of the Corno Bianco) we had followed in the footsteps of Lieut. Payer, who had first conquered the Adamello in the previous year. Henceforth our course lay over unknown ground. The descent from the Adamello snow-fields into Val Camonica had never been attempted, and, from the configuration of the range, was likely to be a matter of difficulty. We had, however, a large space to search over and a choice of several glens to descend into, any one of which would bring us, with more or less circuit, to the great valley. We naturally determined to try first the nearest gap, looking down into the Val Miller and leading directly to Edolo; if that failed we were prepared to go further and force a passage down one of the glaciers falling towards Val Saviore.

Having returned in our old footsteps to the base of the peak, we traversed the snow out of which it rises to its further or south-western foot. On the rock-face overhead I noticed several small ranunculuses in flower at an elevation of 11,500 feet above the sea. A projecting crag on the right of the gap which we had selected as our first point of attack enabled us to reconnoitre what lay below us. We were in a position very much resembling that of the traveller from Zermatt, when he has reached the summit of the Weissthor and gazes down at Macugnaga, except that in our case the valley was not more than 3,500 feet below us. On the other hand, we were on unknown ground and had to trust entirely to our own judgment. That of the guides was prompt and favourable. A nasty tongue of glacier curled over the ridge, but soon broke short from

the steepness of the cliff; so long as we gave a wide berth to the stones discharged by this ill-conditioned neighbour they foresaw no impossibilities or dangers ahead. The rocks proved worthy of our estimate. Although steep—quite as steep as those leading up to the Schreckhorn Sattel—they were thoroughly safe, and gave firm foothold on broad shelves and rough ridges. We went on without check, until within a hundred feet of their base we found ourselves apparently cut off from the snow-field below by a smooth cliff. We underwent a few minutes' grim suspense while Michel and François searched right and left for some ledge or crack. But soon the welcome shout of 'es geht' rose to our ears, and we found our escape. Swift glissades followed, and we shot quickly down the slopes of the little glacier which nestles beneath the crags. Nothing now remained but to scramble over the huge boulders to the stream below us and follow its waters until we struck a path. The Val Miller is a wild upland glen, hemmed in by cliffs, above which are seen the twin snow-crests of the Adamello. In an hour from the glacier we reached the only chalets in the upper valley, known as the Casetta di Miller.[1] The rock on which the hut was founded was highly 'moutonnée,' or polished by glacier action, as our scientific companion did not fail to point out. A few moments later he impressed the fact still more forcibly on our memories. A large bowl brimming with delicious milk had been brought out for our refreshment. Either in the excitement of draining

[1] Messrs. Taylor and Montgomery passed two nights in these huts later in the same year, and, weather forbidding an ascent of the Adamello, crossed into Val Saviore by a wild but easy Pass.

it the drinker overbalanced himself, or a perverse barometer chose that moment to swing between his legs. Anyhow,

> Δούπησεν δὲ πεσών, ἀράβησε δὲ τεύχε' ἐπ' αὐτῷ.
> Down he fell with a thump, and the aneroids rattled about him.

The consequences of the fall were serious: a thick coating of cream, quicksilver and chalet dirt, a bruised knee and—worst of all in the sufferer's mind—several broken instruments.

Opposite the huts we crossed to the left bank of the stream, and followed a cow-path which soon brought us to the verge of the long, abrupt descent separating Val Miller from its continuation the Val di Malga. The path corkscrewed through a gully in quaint little zigzags, built up toilsomely with stones, steep as an attic staircase and odious enough to wind down under a hot afternoon sun. The cows whom we had seen above can scarcely look upon the day of their move for the summer months with the same pleasure which their sisters throughout the Alps are said to exhibit. An English farmer would as soon think of driving his herd to the top of the Monument as up such a place.

We were now again amongst trees, which clothed either bank and added to the beauty of the scenery. The descent was continuous, until a cluster of houses was reached, prettily placed among meadows, in which all the inhabitants were at work, profiting by the fine weather to gather in their hay-harvest. The only creatures left at home were families of white rabbits, which seem to live here on the footing of domestic pets. The elders sat lazily sunning themselves, while the young ones played high jinks without showing the least

fear at our presence. The track now became passable for carts, and fearfully stony. From this point to the high-road we met a specimen of every kind of pavement invented for human torture in Italian valleys. First there was the 'pavé au naturel,' formed of native rock and those wandering stones which seem to grow out of the ground everywhere; next came a steep pitch of the 'pavé aux Alpes,' in which the stones are fixed side by side in wild disorder; then, worse than all, a long spell of round pebbles, such as are found at a third-rate watering-place which cannot afford even one flag down the middle of the footpath. Even the natives seemed to revolt against this precious medley, and frequent short-cuts and side-tracks showed how they avoided the work of their own hands. Presently the road swerved round the hillside to the right, and a lovely reach of Val Camonica opened before our eyes. Immediately in front, surrounded by a wood of chestnuts, was Sonico, and in the distance, built up a slope above the junction of Val Corteno with Val Camonica, rose the towers of Edolo, about one hour's walk distant.

The great shining tableland, lifted above all the lofty Lombard ridges, had fascinated my imagination. When another opportunity offered, I laid my plans so as to combine an ascent of its second summit, the Carè Alto, with a passage across its greatest breadth. At first sight on the map this might seem a bold, even an impossible, attempt, for it involved the crossing of no less than five lofty ridges, varying between 9,800 and 10,000 feet in height. But a study of the levels showed that owing to the uniform upheaval of the mass there would be no descent of more than 200 or 300 feet in

the ten miles between the first and last. Still we thought it well to sleep in the highest châlet on this side the snows.

On a glorious August afternoon we drove down the high-road from Pinzolo to Borzago, whence a mountain-path leads into the glen to which the village has given its name.

At the top of the first ascent a very happily-balanced view opens. The valley slopes are feathered with light foliage. High above them shine the white folds of glacier, while the Carè Alto, half rock half a glittering ice-comb, is the centre of the landscape. Deeper in the glen, beyond the pinetrees and the haybarns, great birches hang over the path which splits into branches in the forest. Here we lost ourselves, and plunged for several minutes amidst broken rocks and dense underwood, tearing our hands and clothes, but filling our mouths with delicious raspberries. On a slope below the cliffs which close the valley stand two summer cottages where we had hoped to sleep. An old woman and her son were cooking their polenta, but no herds were in sight. The old woman seemed only anxious to be rid of the unexpected invaders—she had no milk, no hay to sleep on, absolutely 'niente.' The herd was higher on the mountain, but it was too late for us to reach them—we had better go back. An hour's daylight remained, and we bribed, not without difficulty, the boy to leave his porridge and lead us at once to the herds. We followed him at a swinging cowboy pace up steep hillsides, over rocks, and between waterfalls. But darkness fell and still no friendly tinkle reached our ears. Hurrying on over broken but more level ground, we saw at last something whiter than Adamello granite at our feet.

We were among a flock of Bergamasque sheep. A minute later we plunged into unseen filth, and were brought up short before an enormous boulder. The boy's cheerful statement of 'Ecco la malga' was at first simply incredible. A rock, experience affirmed, could not be a 'malga.' But the boy was right. His shrill shout was sleepily answered from the bowels of the earth, and from a hole under the boulder human forms were dimly seen to issue. For the next few minutes a shower of patois filled the air, amidst which we penetrated a low door and found ourselves in a cave constructed by building a wall of stones against the lower side of the boulder where it overhung. A dying fire threw a feeble light over a crowd of pails and cheeses which filled every foot of available space. One of us sat down on a cheese, another found a cover which converted a milk-pail into a seat. The low slanting roof rendered the least movement difficult and perilous. In the furthest corner where the rock left no space except for a prostrate figure was a bed of hay and skins, fully filled by three shepherds and a girl.

The smallness of the accommodation was made more conspicuous by the disproportion between it and the voices which issued from the shepherds as they moved about to help us in our arrangements. Within a few inches of our ears they bellowed every remark in a Homeric roar, which might without exaggeration have been heard half a mile off. Long habit in shouting to their flocks on a distant hillside, or carrying on conversations across a valley, had so taken hold of them that they seemed quite incapable of reducing their voices to the ordinary pitch of regions where population is less thinly scattered.

Our night did not promise to be luxurious. After a frugal supper on bread and chocolate, we made our bed as well as we could. The shelter being far above the forest, logs were not easily procurable, and the shepherds had consequently collected as fuel a heap of slender brushwood. Having piled away some of the pails and cheeses we spread the green branches out on the floor as a mattress. A macintosh served for a sheet, and our entertainers supplied a rug for our feet. The couch was at least not painfully uncomfortable; and though each of us felt sure in the morning that he had not slept, no one had found the night interminable except poor François, who insisted on sitting and smoking over the fire, and was consequently only half awake all the next day.

At daybreak we issued into the open air. We found ourselves in the wild hollow at the eastern base of the Carè Alto, separated from the great Borzago Glacier by a rocky spur. Mounting first towards and then along this ridge, we quickly approached the mountain. Had we remained on the rocks, and then boldly struck up the eastern face, we should, I believe, quickly have settled with our peak. But François did not favour this plan; moreover, our further intentions gave a motive for carrying our baggage to the side of the peak to which it would be most convenient to descend.

We consequently slid down several hundred feet on to the great glacier, and made a flank march towards the much higher northern base of the Carè Alto. This operation caused some delay. The snow, where it curled over from the highest plain, broke into huge chasms. There was, it was true, always an easy way round each of them; but the ways round seldom coincided, and for

to another basin, that of the Mandron Glacier, where we crossed the track to the Adamello. At its further extremity—it is about three miles broad—we saw before us the fifth ridge, the last which divided us from Val d'Avio.[1]

As we approached the pass a family group of three chamois were seen moving before us on the snow. Presently a gun was fired from among the rocks of the Corni del Coppine, and a solitary hunter sprang forward. The shot had missed, and the chamois, whom we had been unconsciously driving, raced past us. One of them was quite young, and it was touching to see how the two parents not only would move no faster than the pace of their child, but placed themselves on either side of it, as if purposely sheltering it from danger. My condolences with the sportsman were not very heartfelt.

A steep gully, an easy glacier, a pathless hillside, helped us quickly down to the first chalet in Val d'Avio. A few yards beyond it the valley is broken by a lofty cliff. At the foot of a steep zigzag beside the thundering waters we entered one of the level platforms common in this group. Its smooth expanse of meadow was alive with cows and goats, now collected for the night round the herdsmen's huts. Two torrents—one the grey child of the glaciers, the other clear and spring-born—rushed down upon us in splendid cascades. In the background the Adamello raised its icy horn.

Immediately below the alp lies a large lake. The

[1] A good view of the Bedole Glacier from this point, the Passo del Mandron, appeared in the publications for 1874 of the German Alpine Club. There are some serious mistakes, however, in the identification of various points. The Lobbia Pass should be the Lobbia Alta, the Lobbia Alta the Dosson di Genova, and the Passo della Lobbia Alta the Passo d'Adamo.

scene somewhat resembles the Lac de Gaube, but the features of the landscape are more savage, bolder, and on a larger scale. The lake itself, however, is unfortunately of the ordinary murky-grey colour of Swiss glacier water.

Beyond the platform of the lake the glen falls with extraordinary rapidity, and a very stony path, mainly on the left bank, leads down past a succession of waterfalls, any one of which in another country might become famous.

The lower level of the valley is devastated by the torrent. For Ponte di Legno it is best to cross its stony bed and follow a cart-track joining the Tonale road a little below Pontagna. When we entered the high-road night overtook us, and we walked the three uphill kilomètres to Ponte di Legno at our fastest pace, killing distance and fatigue with the present pleasure of rapid motion.

CHAPTER X.

PINZOLO AND CAMPIGLIO.

For August be your dwelling thirty towers
Within an Alpine valley mountainous,
Where never the sea wind may vex your hours,
But their life, separate, like a star, be yours.
So alway drawing happiness ye shall tread,
Your valley parted by a rivulet,
Which day and night shall flow sedate and smooth,
There all through noon ye may possess the shade.

FOLGORE DA SAN GEMIGNANO, A.D. 1260;
Rossetti's Translation.

PINZOLO—THE CHURCHES OF VAL RENDENA—HISTORY AND LEGENDS—VAL NAMBINO—THE SPERRA GROUP—LA MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO—HOSPICE AND PENSION.

Pinzolo is conspicuous amongst the villages which cluster round the head of Val Rendena by its tall campanile of Adamello granite, a pretty feature of the landscape, but, as I shall afterwards show, an evil sign of the times. Its houses, gathered along two stone-paved streets and round a little open space—the piazza—stand close against the eastern hillside at the point where the mountain-ranges, bending towards one another and almost joining, enclose in their semicircular folds the lower valley. Great torrents rush out of two clefts in the hills, the openings of Val Nambino and Val di Genova, and but for human industry would devastate the low

ground on their banks. But they are held fast in fetters of their own contriving. The huge granite boulders, which in former floods they have borne down from the heart of the Presanella or the Adamello, have been turned to account for the building of massive dykes through which so much water only is allowed to pass as will suffice to irrigate the plain and turn its alluvial soil into the richest of water-meadows.

The beauty of the situation does not, like that of Grindelwald or Chamonix, depend on mountain sublimity. On one side some shreds of snow and granite belonging to the Presanella come into view. On the other the southern crest of the Brenta group lies couched like a huge gold-red Egyptian sphinx on the green back of a lower hill. But these are mere glimpses of the upper world, valuable and suggestive glimpses it is true, but not sufficient to decide the character of the whole landscape. The hills which encircle the head of Val Rendena rise in steep but nowhere perpendicular banks, swathed in chestnut woods about their base, lying open higher up in sloping meadows fringed with mountain ash, birch and pine. The valley floor, a smooth, brilliantly green carpet, gives an impression of wealth and softness rendered more welcome by the knowledge of the rugged grandeur so close at hand.

It would be hard to find a more delightful spot in which to idle away a sunny day than the hillside immediately behind Pinzolo. It is only needful to climb a few hundred yards among the chestnut-boles to find platforms covered with a soft carpet of moss, ferns and delicate southern flowers. Here under the shade of dancing leaves, fanned by soft breezes and lulled by the cool tinkle of falling water and the murmur of innumer-

able living things which fills an Italian noon, the restless traveller may for once enjoy unmixed with other thoughts the sympathetic delight of coexistence with a world seemingly for the moment wholly given up to enjoyment.

In another mood he may climb higher and higher through the forest, gaining at each step new glimpses of the bright fields and villages of Val Rendena, and watching the icy horns of the Adamello group as they shoot out one by one against the sky. Then entering a hidden upland glen he will reach a gap where, in the opposite direction, the dolomite towers soar stark and red over the green slopes. Hence he may descend into Val Agola, and so to Campiglio, or, turning to the right, wander along shady forest paths to the ridge of the Pra Fiori. But left of the depression, and cut off by it from the other hills, rises a grassy down which must give one of the most perfect views of the surrounding ranges, raking as it does Val di Genova, Val Rendena, and Val Nambino. There is a châlet within five minutes of the meadow-top, but any lady who likes the walk may, so far as I know, boast herself afterwards of having made 'the first ascent by travellers' of the Dos di Sabione.

If the rain-clouds hung low on the hills and the woods are too wet for loitering in, the old churches of the valley may give employment. The mother-chapel near the mouth of Val di Borzago has been already referred to. The large modern church in the village, with its campanile built at the cost of the noble forests of Val di Genova, has no particular interest.[1] But five

[1] In Southern Tyrol campaniles are generally built by the communes which have realised their wealth by cutting down their forests, and the great sawmills at the mouth of Val di Genova have undoubtedly had a

hundred yards north of Pinzolo stands San Vigilio, a plain building consisting of a nave and small chancel, with a belfry, probably of older date, at the western end. The southern face is decorated with a frescoed Dance of Death, dated 1539, a work of some spirit, and retaining traces of rich colouring. We may stroll further across the valley to the romantically situated chapel of San Stefano perched high among the woods on a granite bluff above the mouth of Val di Genova. The outside is covered with representations of the life of the saint, and another Triumph of Death, dated 1519; within is a very curious fresco of Charlemagne—I beg Mr. Freeman's pardon, the great Karl—engaged, in company with a Pope, in baptising the heathen. Close by, a long and most interesting inscription tells the history of the campaign, in the course of which the great emperor penetrated this remote region. The following is a very curtailed summary of the events there recorded.[1]

Lupus, Lord of Bergamo, was a pagan, and Charles strove with him to convert him. But Lupus took a certain Sandro and many others and cut off their heads; whereupon there appeared six burning torches, no one

large share in the execution of this pious work. It is most distressing to see from year to year how greed of immediate gain is leading the peasantry to treat their mountains like convicts. Ample as the looks were, they have been terribly thinned even in the last few years. Val di Genova, within my recollection, has lost much of its ancient and primeval wealth of verdure. The comparative barrenness of its lower portion was painful on my last visit. Good forest-laws may restore in the future the waste of the last few years, but no traveller in this century will ever see the valley clothed in the same full-folded mantle which, eleven years ago, made our long walk from the Presanella to Val Rendena one continuous delight.

[1] See Appendix D, where this inscription is given in full, together with a description of the frescoes of San Vigilio.

SAN STEFANO AND THE CIMA DI NADDISIO

holding them; and by God's grace the bells rang without earthly aid. Seeing this miracle, Lupus with all his people was converted to the Catholic faith, and joined Charles. The host, numbering 4,000 spears, marched up Val Camonica, slaying heretics, such as Lord Hercules and King Comerus, destroying castles, and building churches. Then they crossed a mountain where there was a great fight between the Christians and pagans, at a place since known as 'Mortarolus.'

From the 'Mons Toni' (the Tonale) the army descended to Plezan (Pelizzano), where it made a great slaughter of the heathen, and so reached Val Rendena by the route of the Ginevrie Pass. 'And they came to the church of San Stefano and baptised a very great people. And the said Charles made an end of converting all the Jews and pagans at the church of San Stefano, and there he left a book in which were contained all the things he had done throughout the world.'

The chroniclers tell us little of all these matters.[1] The Alpine Passes of the Middle Ages is a chapter of history which, so far as I know, has not yet been satisfactorily written. Much material for it doubtless exists, although not in a form very easy of collection. It would be a work full of interest to trace how in succeeding centuries first one then another route rose into importance; and the present moment, when the Alps are for all practical and commercial purposes on the brink of annihilation, when mountain roads are about to yield

[1] In the 'Vita Caroli' of Egicharth is the following tantalising passage: 'Italiam intranti quam difficilis Alpium tractus fuerit quantique Francorum labores in viis montium jugis et convallibus in cultus asperis atque asperis cautis superantur sint hoc loco describere, nisi,' &c. The words italicised apply singularly well to dolomitic landscape, but it was probably the St. Bernard and Mt. Cenis that the chronicler had in mind.

to burrows, seems peculiarly well suited for a review of the whole subject.

Higher in the hills between Val di Genova and Val di Borzago, beside a little lake, lies the chapel of San Giuliano, a tempting object for an excursion, including a visit to the latter valley, and perhaps an ascent of the Corno Alto, one of the high points seen from Val Nambino against the Lares snows. The saint, according to local legend, seems to have been a somewhat testy old hermit. Having been refused milk by some shepherds, he at once turned them and their flocks into boulders, which may still be seen. I suspect San Giuliano was no saint at all, but some mountain spirit known to earlier times, who reappeared under this new disguise with the malicious intention of discrediting the new religion.

I can only indicate briefly the varied attractions of Pinzolo and its immediate neighbourhood, leaving to each visitor the pleasure of fresh discovery. But on looking back I find that I have left out what ought to have been the most prominent object in my picture. Most English travellers are disposed to agree with Dr. Johnson that the most beautiful landscape in the world would be improved by a good inn in the foreground. It is too late to put Signor Bonapace's in this position, but I will do my best to repair the slight by describing it at once, and with some minuteness.

The house remains up to the present time a good specimen of the country inn of Southern Tyrol. It is kept by well-to-do people, who drive an excellent trade with their own country-folk, and until the last year or two looked with some astonishment on the few pleasure-travellers whom each summer brought them. An arched doorway opens out of the paved street into a sort of

barn, whence a steep stone staircase leads up into a dark, low-roofed hall or lobby, crowded with benches and tables. Out of it open two still gloomier inner chambers. In one a faint glimmer of bright copper, a sound of hissing, and a bustling of Marthas, reveal the kitchen; in the other, at the foot of an enormous family bed, leaning over a table, sits the master of the house, one eye intent on accounts, the other keeping a quiet watch over what goes on around. At his order a handmaiden will leave her labours in the kitchen and conduct you up another steep flight of stairs, and into a large dormitory containing five beds, three tables, and two washing-basins, which used to be considered to fulfil every possible requirement for night accommodation. Now, however, several smaller apartments have been furnished for guests, and a cheerful room in the next house, over the grocer's shop, is also put at the service of English prejudice. Meals cooked in the fashion of the country, but very plentiful, are served in a little room with a bed in the corner, which opens out of the lobby.

Both are generally filled of an evening with a crowd of customers of the peasant-farmer class, perfectly well conducted, but too talkative and fond of smoking to be altogether agreeable companions. Yet dark and dingy and crowded though it is, there is romance about this typical Italian mountain inn. Its discomforts are soon forgotten, and it lives in our memories by many cheerful sights and sounds: the splash of the fountain at the corner under the walnut-tree, where the women in their bright-coloured handkerchiefs wash their linen, and call out cheerily to the barefooted little Pietros and Marias playing in the sunshine; the sudden bustle and tinkle of the goats returning from the mountain as they troop

off in little companies to their separate homes; the noise of the bowls and the laughter of the players, kept up till there is no longer light to pursue the game: last of all, as if in solemn contrast to the exuberant life of the day, the melancholy voice of the watchman ringing out through the silent night.

The larger of the two streams which meet at Pinzolo issues from Val di Genova; the second flows out of a gap in the hills continuing the line of depression of Val Rendena. Scarcely two miles higher, beyond the neighbouring village of Caresolo, this torrent again divides. On the left Val Nambrone leads up towards the flanks of the Presanella. A steep ascent is necessary to gain the highest stretch of Val Nambino, a wide, sunny vale, studded with cottages and surrounded by green slopes and forests.

The old cart-track, lately converted into a good carriage-road, skirts continuously the western hillside, leaving the stream far below in a narrow bed. Behind us the snows of the Carè Alto and its neighbours gradually rise into sight above a lower ridge graced with singularly symmetrical summits.

But our attention is soon riveted on the new mountain range which rises beyond the valley. High amongst the clouds soar its red towers and pinnacles; the bold ridges which support them sweep down upon us in majestic curves. Three glens, green with beech copses, push up boldly into the heart of the mountain. The one opposite is Val di Brenta, rising towards its Bocca, the gap on the north of the most stupendous castle: the furthest, the Vallesinella, leads by another strange gateway to Molveno, the nearest is Val Agola, also with passes for mountaineers or paths for ramblers.

J. Gilbert del.

VAL DI BRENTA.

From the Road to Campiglio.

We have already seen from a distance, or skirted the sides of, the Brenta group. From the crests of the Adamello chain or from the depths of Val di Genova a mysterious range utterly unlike anything in the central Alps[1] has been frequently before our eyes. At Pinzolo, or on the Pra Fiori, we have had glimpses of strange red peaks. But we seem now to have come for the first time into their immediate presence.

The spectator standing on the western slopes of Val Nambino sees high above everything else against the eastern sky two huge square fortresses built up of horizontal courses of masonry. The ground-colour of their walls is a yellowish grey, streaked with red and black, and broken here and there by lines of shining white, where a steep glacier-stair scales the precipice. The massiveness of these blocks adds by contrast to the effect of the surrounding pinnacles. Before the traveller's eyes rise towers, horns, cupolas, columns, spires, crowded together in endless variety. Here he fancies must be the workshop of Nature, and these are her store of models. Or he is reminded of some architectural drawing, a collection of the great buildings of the world, or the spires of Sir Christopher Wren.

These peaks are the advance-guard of the Tyrolese dolomites, boldly thrown across the valley of the Adige, as if to challenge on their own ground the snowy ranks

[1] There are several dolomitic groups in Swiss territory. One of the most considerable has already been described (Ch. V.). Another is the cluster of bold peaks standing between the Julier and Albula roads, of which the highest summits are the Piz d'Aela, Tinzenhorn, and Piz St. Michel. There is also dolomite between the Via Mala and the Savien Thal, and in other parts of Switzerland. But none of these masses—probably owing to some slight difference in the composition of their crags—show the peculiar characteristics of the rock in a sufficiently marked manner to attract attention except on close approach.

of the Ortler and Adamello. They are separated from the granite by no wide depression such as divides the Venetian Alps and the Tauern, but only by a single valley. The boulder which rolls from the flanks of the Presanella will scarcely halt before it rests on dolomitic soil.

The Eastern Alps could scarcely have put forward a nobler champion than the range before us. Primiero and Auronzo may perhaps equal the marvellous skyline; but they offer nothing to rival the symmetry of the whole mass of the Brenta as it rises above Val Nambino. Consider the lower stories of the huge edifice. The slope is not monotonous in uniformity, yet the platforms which break it are too narrow to diminish by foreshortening the apparent height of the summits. From our feet rise powerful spurs, below dark with pines, above bare and white; their form is simple and severe, but every shifting light brings out fresh details in the fretwork which time has carved deeply into their sides. Like the flying buttresses of some vast cathedral they lead the eye up to the straight perpendicular lines of the crowning towers.

When we come to study the range more generally, what incomparable variety of beauty! On the west lies a green, open Alpine valley. The Lago di Molveno reflects in its blue mirror the eastern crags. The southern slopes are a rich tangle of vines and chestnuts: the beeches push up and dispute with the pines the inner glens; the cyclamens and gentians gird with successive belts of brightness the mountain form.

The traveller, when he penetrates this fantastic chain, finds himself at first in narrow glens watered by clear streams, now smooth-flowing over lawns of the

softest turf, now dancing through beechwoods, now plunging deep into some miniature ravine hung with mosses and bright-berried ashes. He forgets, in the charm of what is near at hand, what he came to see. Then suddenly through the tree-tops an incredible yellow flame, set for ever between the green and blue, recalls the presence of the dolomites, and urges him to further exertion. He climbs a steep barrier, and the pinnacles range themselves as portions of a vast amphitheatre of rock. He advances a few hundred yards further along the level and the scene is changed. One solitary tower overclimbs the clouds and mixes with the sky. A second ascent brings another shift. Rocks, grey, gold, red, brown and black, cluster round his bewildered eyes, and he begins to doubt whether the scene is a solid reality or some Alastor-inspired Vision of Solitude.

Then, after wandering all the morning between red rocks and over two or three hours of ice, he may find himself in the evening amongst figs, olives and lemon-groves. For the Brenta group is planted not in the midst of a mountain maze, but on the edge of the deepest cleft in the Alps. From the white crown of the highest peak to Alle Sarche is a descent of 10,500 feet.

It is a disappointment to find that, for the moment, we must turn our backs on all this beauty, and that our resting-place lies out of sight of it, a mile further on.

The builders of the hospice of 'La Madonna di Campiglio' were more anxious for safety in winter than for a fair prospect in summer. They naturally preferred a meadow secure from avalanches, yet sufficiently protected from the north by low banks, to the steeper

and more broken hillsides of the lower Val Nambino. After turning a corner beyond which the wooded spurs of Monte Spinale cut off the view of the Brenta chain, the road crosses the stream and enters a broad, smooth hay-field, surrounded by slopes the summits of which lie too far back to give dignity to the landscape. In the centre of this plain, far away from any village, stands the hospice and pilgrimage church of Campiglio.

The existence of so large a building on a route now so little frequented must strike everyone as curious and unexpected. But in fact these remote valleys were once the highways of traffic. Not only, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, did emperors lead their hosts through the recesses of the Lombard Alps, but the merchandise of Venice also sought these roundabout paths.

In olden times the gorge of the Adige was narrow and perilous for an invader, crowded with feudal castles, each claiming its toll from commerce. Princes and merchants seem to have frequently turned westwards from Botzen across the Tonale, or southwards through Pinzolo and Val Buona to Brescia. Then Campiglio was built, it is said by the Templars, to lodge the frequent passers-by and break the long stage between the inhabited valleys.

Similar hospices are found elsewhere in the Eastern Alps: at San Martino, Paneveggio, and Auf der Plecken. But Campiglio is the largest establishment of its kind. The buildings are ranged in the form of a quadrangle, of which the hospice occupies three sides. Long galleries lead from wing to wing and give access to the rooms, which all face outwards and are cheerful and

well lighted. The church, at the building of which, according to local legend, angels assisted, occupies part of the fourth side of the quadrangle. It contains a fresco, not without merit, of the early part of the sixteenth century.

After some centuries traffic turned into other channels, and the monks who had hitherto fulfilled the duties of hospitality departed, leaving their place scantily filled by a peasant farmer, who kept one or two rooms ready for strangers. On my first visit the old hospice was in this phase of its existence. The fare was rough but good, and the milk, cream, and butter delicious. The cows indeed seemed the mistresses of the place, and all the other living creatures their attendants. For their accommodation a new and spacious stable had been lately raised. The front was decorated with carving: the interior formed a sort of hall of columns, each column an unsmoothed fir-trunk. Down the centre ran a spacious passage, on either side of which thirty-five cows were ranged before their mangers.

Lately, however, the herd has been disturbed in its sole possession, and Campiglio has started on a new path to fame. The farmer who owns all the surrounding alps and woods, and whose wealth is locally looked on as boundless, conceived an idea. Why should not the big house be made use of? Rabbi, across the Val di Sole, was crowded with the fashion of the Trentino. Campiglio also should become a 'Stabilimento Alpino,' a 'Kurort' for Brescia and Botzen. He secured a coadjutor in the owner of a large inn at Arco, a young man with international views and desirous for more than a local success. In a Florence newspaper, addressed to tourists of all nations, appeared, in the spring of

1874, a large announcement of the opening of a 'magnifico stabilimento,' with polyglot attendance, a resident physician, and the usual advantages.

Last year I explored this new magnificence. Externally it displayed itself in some additions and wooden galleries over the courtyard. Indoors many of the rooms had been prepared for occupation and a large bare salle-à-manger added. There was also a comfortable general sitting-room.

The splendour was still growing, for, as new guests arrived, a carpenter employed downstairs ran up fresh furniture for their use, some of the hundred bedrooms of the advertisement being still in a state of more than conventual simplicity. The 'service bon et exact' was represented by three Italian youths, pale, untidy and swift-footed, who fled with the greatest alacrity from any guest whose face gave tokens of an approaching want. Their goodwill, however, was on the whole so much in excess of their capacities that it was impossible to treat them seriously.[1] For instance, the

[1] It would be unfair to dwell on the shortcomings of an inn but just opened in a remote and, until the completion of the new road, somewhat inaccessible situation, without adding that great improvements were promised for this year (1875). As these pages are passing through the press, I learn from a new advertisement in *Le Finelale*, that the owner of the house and land has taken the management of the hotel into his own hands. I shall let him speak for himself.

'Campiglio. Tyrol. Le grandiose Etablissement Alpin de Campiglio, dans une position enchanteresse, à plus de 1600 mètres de hauteur, est honoré par le concours de nombreux visiteurs, qui trouvent la santé et le repos dans son air des plus salubres, ses bains exquis, ses bains et boissons ferrugineuses, ses douches, ses cures de lait et petit lait, son service médical, ses eaux ferrugineuses, apportées journellement de Pejo et Rabbi aux prix de 6 sobli autrichiens la bouteille de 2 litres, dans sa cuisine choisie, dans son service bien organisé, dans les nombreux amusements qu'offre l'endroit,

head-waiter, having been charged by an Englishman to wake him and get ready an early breakfast, was found in the morning fast asleep in a chair in which he had sat up all night with a fond intention of carrying out his instructions. It must in fairness be added that, if an early start was not better understood and provided for, it was chiefly the fault of the guests. With a few notable exceptions they were the least active and enterprising company I ever set eyes on. With exquisite scenes on every side of them within a short half-hour's distance, they were content to spend their days in the sleepy hollow, or, if they took a walk at all, strolled along the new road for three hundred yards, that is, nearly halfway to the corner of revelation where the great view bursts so splendidly into sight. Guide-books not having yet catalogued 'excursions from Campiglio,' it never seemed to enter their minds that there could be any; and they were content to loiter away their time among the glories of nature, having eyes and seeing nothing. If you asked your neighbour at the dinner-table which of the glens of the dolomites

dans les belles excursions aux environs, dans les confors intérieurs de l'établissement, ses vastes salons avec pianos, les cavalcades, etc. etc.

'Le Propriétaire soussigné en ayant pris lui-même la direction, pour éviter tout inconvénient, offre des pensions à 5 frs. pour ceux qui y feront un séjour d'au moins 10 jours, comprenant le logement, déjeuner, dîner et souper, vin à part, et sans aucune obligation pour le service.

'Il n'a pas reculé à la dépense pour mettre l'établissement en communication avec la route postale, et une nouvelle route carrossable le réunit à Pinzolo. Il tient aussi des voitures de Campiglio à Pinzolo à des prix très modérés, et, en recevant l'avis à temps, aussi de Campiglio à Trento et Riva, et vice-versa, au prix de 50 frs. pour 5 personnes, pour ceux qui prennent la pension.

'L'établissement s'ouvre le 1 Juin prochain.

'*Le Propriétaire*, G. Battista Rizzi.

'Campiglio, 1 Mars 1875.'

he had rambled into? he did not know there were any; if he had seen the Lares snow-fields flush at sunrise or swim in sunset haze? if he had stood on any crest or 'tower of observance' high enough to overlook the Trentino to where the peaks of Primiero and Cadore raise their ramparts against a golden sky?—he could only reply with a stare of dull incredulity.

But, once hardened to the contemplation of such misery in one's fellow-creatures, the state of the pension was not without its advantages. The gregarious British tourist was happily conspicuous by his absence; Germans were rare, and the few who passed did not care to linger where they were not allowed to smoke with their guides in a public room during other people's meals.

Consequently there were none of those absurd but most disagreeable differences over windows which arise whenever the haters of fresh air gather in any number. For even with the greatest respect for a nation and the strongest desire to fraternise with its members, it is hardly possible to get on well with people whose favourite atmosphere is to you as insupportable as Mars might be to the inhabitants of this earth. Extended travel must surely in time enable the North German mind to realise the existence, at least in others, of a horror of stuffiness. I am sure that when this fact is once grasped many worthy men will be saved from behaviour which if it did not arise from want of imagination would be intolerable bearishness.

But if we speak freely of the shortcomings of others we must not forget our own excesses. The appropriation, no matter for what purpose, of the public room of an inn by a section of the guests is a thoroughly selfish and unwarrantable proceeding. What should we think

in Scotland if an American congregation were to take possession of the inn coffee-room every Sunday, and use it constantly on weekday evenings for practising hymns? Yet this is what on the Continent tourists of other nations have to submit to in all spots which have been discovered by either of our missionary societies. No one can reasonably object to English churches being built wherever the sick are sent, or even, as a luxury and by those who can afford it, at such places as Chamonix and Zermatt. But it is difficult to believe that our countrymen are so much creatures of habit that they cannot sometimes gratify their religious emotion in the Greek clearness of the mountain-top or under the Gothic shade of the neighbouring grove without intruding their devotions on their fellow-travellers of other creeds or countries.

At Campiglio, for the present at least, the Italian coming down on Sunday morning runs no risk of finding himself in the midst of a transformation scene; the tables chased, the chairs ranged in regimental ranks, his acquaintance in the grey suit of last night, black-coated and roped round his neck with a white tie, pinning up notices of hymns on the backs of 'menus,' and a much-embarrassed host endeavouring to explain to the non-British guests the cause of the general turmoil.

I must not dismiss the Stabilimento without a short mention of its two most important inmates at the time of my visit. The first was a young member of the local 'Societa Alpina,' whose adventures and heroism had made him a public character. Accompanied by the gardener and carpenter of the establishment, he had ventured to attack one of the limestone peaks east of

Val Selva. The way proved longer and more arduous than had been expected, and night was falling as the party descended a narrow crest of the mountain. Suddenly they were made to pause by a terrific roar, and a few moments afterwards beheld, several hundred feet below, and on a spot they must pass, what they believed to be a large bear. The animal instead of walking off, as bears in every-day life are accustomed to do, behaved exactly like a bear in a story, or one of the animals which are the terror and delight of the modern nursery. Erect on his hind legs, he flashed fury from his eyes, opening his red mouth and snapping his jaws at intervals with ferocious significance. 'Si può immaginare nostra paura,' said the poor mountaineer. He and his companions prudently decided not to risk a nearer encounter with a monster who knew his part so perfectly. They stopped exactly where they were, and spent the night, haunted by deep breathings and strange sounds, which they attributed generally to wild animals, and more particularly to the bear, camozzi and contrabandisti.

The gardener who was a sharer in this adventure was, it appeared, permanently attached to the establishment. This gentleman spent many hours daily under the shelter of a vast felt wideawake, superintending the laying out of the surrounding grounds, which consisted of a flat square plot of meadow, perhaps thirty yards by twenty. But genius shows itself in small things as well as great. The variety of shape of which flower-beds are capable is endless; and with an underling provided with long strips of turf to mark the edges, our artist studied at leisure the most pleasing forms and combinations. The ground idea, one showing no slight

originality, was taken from a plate of veal cutlets such as sometimes appeared at the midday meal. One cutlet a day was as much, however, as the creative mind could accomplish without risk of repetition; and this finished, the broad hat and its owner would after a few minutes of thankful contemplation retreat for rest to a neighbouring bench.

To sum up. Those who look for the charm of Campiglio in any view from the windows will be cruelly disappointed. Its attraction lies in the wonderful freshness and purity of the air, which rivals that of the Engadine, and in the variety and beauty of the excursions within reach.

For ladies, botanists, and quiet strollers there is an unusual abundance of easy walks, through shady glades full of rare and beautiful flowers and ferns, by the side of clear dove-coloured brooks glancing down over the limestone shelves, or up to secluded tarns and grassy ridges whence the great horns and teeth glow orange against the sky, or the Adamello snows glitter in the sunlight. Moreover, active climbers have within easy reach a variety of glacier-work which all but two or three of the greatest Swiss centres might envy, and rock scenery such as Switzerland can nowhere rival.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BRENTA GROUP.[1]

The mighty pyramids of stone
Which wedgelike cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen and better known
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.—Longfellow.

VAL DI BRENTA—BOCCA DEI CAMOSCI—VAL AGOLA—PASSO D'AMBIES—VAL DI NOCE—CIMA PRESANELLA—CIMA DI BRENTA—PASSO DI BRENTA—VAL TERLENGIA—MOLVENO—CIMA TOSA—BOCCA DI BRENTA.

It was from Pinzolo that we first started for the Bocca di Brenta. On the evening of our ascent of the Presanella we sent François to enquire about the pass, our only knowledge of which was drawn from the notice in the first edition of the 'Alpine Guide,' where it was spoken of 'as likely hereafter to be familiar to mountaineers as one of the most romantic walks in the Alps.' A peasant who declared himself to be well acquainted with the way was easily found, and at a reasonably early hour next morning we had slept off the fatigues of the day before and were again on the march. Leaving the cart-road to Campiglio we followed a footpath passing among scattered hamlets and through fertile meadows, until near some saw-mills it crossed to the left bank of the stream.

We here quitted the main valley and entered the

[1] See Appendix E on the nomenclature of this group.

mouth of Val di Brenta, a deep short glen clothed in beech and pine-woods. Our track led us through forest glades and over grassy banks covered in profusion with the wild fruits of the Alps. Bilberries carpeted the ground, strawberries fit for Titania's own table dangled temptingly on the banks. While we lingered a morning mist swept off and a bevy of wild pinnacles peered down on us, one gigantic tower looming above them all.

The scenery we were entering was at once strange and exciting. The common features of Alpine landscapes were changed; as if by some sudden enchantment we found ourselves amongst richer forests, purer streams, more fantastic crags.

The rocks which pierced the sky seemed solid, yet how could limestone take the form and subtle colours of flame? We could see ice overhead, yet how could the stream which sparkled at our side between mossy banks be a glacier child, or any relation to the noisy and muddy Swiss torrent? Later in the day we learnt the secret of its purity; the water as it creeps from the ice is filtered underground until it is fit company for the delicate trees and flowers which it soon joins.

Where a barrier of rock completely closed the glen we began to climb the southern hillside, zigzagging steeply amidst wet mossy crags and the tangled branches of a wood of creeping pines. The path suddenly reached the rim of an upper platform lying in the centre of the great peaks. Hitherto we had been wandering amidst woods and over broken ground, whence no general view could be gained. But the lawn on which we now lay was in the very heart of things. Full opposite to us rose a colossal rock, one of the most prodigious monuments of Nature's forces. Its lower portion rose in

diminishing stories like the Tower of Babel of old Bible pictures. Above it was a perfect precipice, an upright block, the top of which was 4,000 to 4,500 feet above our heads. Behind this gigantic keep a vast mountain fortress stretched out its long lines of turrets and bastions. But as we approached its base the great tower rose alone and unsupported, and the boldness of its outline became almost incredible. It fairly challenges comparison with the Matterhorn from the Hörnli, or the Cimon della Pala from above Paneveggio; and it combines to a great extent the noble solidity of the Swiss peak with the peculiar upright structure which gives dolomite its strange resemblance to human architecture.

But if the central object of the picture was enough to keep our attention fixed in growing astonishment, there was much else which called for notice. On our left was a second massive rock castle, the Cima di Brenta, connected with the Cima Tosa by the Fulmini di Brenta, a long line of flame-like pinnacles of the strangest shapes, some of them seeming to bulge near the top like a Russian steeple. Before us, between one of the loftiest of these spires and the Cima Tosa, lay a deep snowy gap which I pointed out as the Bocca di Brenta. Our peasant guide at once corrected me; he declared that the only passage to Molveno was to be found at the head of a long glacier ribbon crumpled up amongst the cliffs of the Tosa. As he professed to have stood on the summit and looked down the other side, we were unwillingly forced to believe him.

A very steep goat-track led us through rhododendron bushes to the level of the glacier, from which no visible stream came forth. After traversing a huge and un-

usually crumbling moraine, we entered upon the ice which, though steep, was little crevassed. The rock scenery was now most extraordinary. On either hand a line of ramparts rose sheer out of the glacier in precipices of mingled murky red and ashy-tinted grey; behind us lay the massive block of the Cima di Brenta, its precipices relieved by slender snow-streaks. In the distance was the Ortler group, with ominous clouds hanging about its summits. As we penetrated further the valley of ice rose in long steep steps before us. Overcoming these by the occasional use of the axe we reached a recess, the reservoir of the winter snows, at the back of the great tower of the Cima Tosa. On the right was a well-marked gap, which the guide pointed out as the Bocca. We were soon standing on it; at the same moment a pair of horns appeared on the opposite side, and we found ourselves face to face with a chamois. For some seconds we stared at the animal, and it at us, in mutual surprise. The moment some one spoke the chamois started off over the snow-field, and when we shouted after it took to the almost perpendicular rocks of the Cima Pra dei Camozzi, halting occasionally for a moment at François' whistle.

A considerable ice-field now lay before us, apparently slanting away to the west, in the direction of Pinzolo. The porter nevertheless insisted that we were on the true pass; but I soon saw that instead of having crossed the real backbone of the range we were only on one of its ribs, a secondary ridge which joins the Cima Tosa with the peak marked in the Austrian Ordnance Survey as the Cima Pra dei Camozzi. What was to be done? We were in the centre of a wilderness, clouds were rapidly sweeping up from behind, and we had fairly lost

our way. The glacier before us must come down from the main ridge. Would this afford a passage? We determined to try, the porter following in sullen silence. After climbing a hard-frozen bank we reached the crest and looked down on a sea of mist. As we stood there the clouds enveloped us and snow began to fall heavily. Sheltering in a niche among the rocks on the eastern side of the ridge we turned to that universal resource under difficulties, the provision-sack, while François explored the cliffs below. Our guide soon returned with a face portending failure. After descending about 100 feet, he had reached an absolute precipice, so lofty that no noise announced the fall of the stones he rolled over its edge. The shouts of herdsmen rose tantalisingly out of the depths below, coming, no doubt, from the highest alp in Val d'Ambies, a lateral glen which falls into the Sarca valley near the Baths of Comano.

What was to be done? We were, like Bunyan's pilgrims in the Enchanted Ground, amidst the ruins of Castle Doubting, with no clue to guide us out of the wilderness. My companions appreciated the position and played their parts accordingly,—one, as Giant Despair, sallying on us with frightful prognostications of a night in the snow, while another, as Hopeful, maintained that we should still sleep at Molveno. Finally we determined to follow wherever the glacier led us.

The porter, the source of all our misfortunes, had been discovered to be profiting by our discussion to pocket a large share of our already small stock of provisions. He had been engaged only as far as the Bocca, and as he still insisted that we were on it we took him at his word and dismissed him on the spot.

Slithering somehow down the ice-slope we tramped

on through mists until in half-an-hour we reached a moraine which we followed for some distance. Then we took shelter for some time in a cuplike hollow amongst the rocks, in hopes that a partial lifting of the snow-veil might show us something more of the face of the country around. But, far from amending, the storm only grew thicker.

We had barely advanced a hundred yards from the hospitable crannny when François, who was leading, came to a sudden halt. We were standing, so far as we could see, on the brow of a precipice. Nothing was visible below but one mass of mist, dense with snow-flakes; around us whirled the seething clouds, which had already draped the crags in wintry mantles. A more dismal scene I never wish to look upon; we realised the terrors of the Alps in a spring 'tourmente,' when an icy wind is added to the snow and mists. A momentary break revealed a shelf some fifty feet below us. By making a slight circuit a practicable course was found, and we let ourselves from ledge to ledge of a face of rocks, made slippery by the melting snow. Thus we worked slowly downwards, now stumbling over broken boulders, now clambering down ledges by the help of hands and feet. Occasionally we were brought to a standstill; but François' 'Allez seulement' was soon heard, the signal for further progress. A friendly cleft came to our aid, and when forced to leave it we were again in the region of creeping pines. Using their gnarled branches to swing ourselves down by, we finally reached a faint track, which bore to the right across a rough slope of scree, and then descended into a marshy basin. This must have been the head of Val d'Agola, recommended as an excursion from Pinzolo by Mr. Ball.

The track mounted slightly towards the left, until it joined a broad terrace-path winding at a level along the hillside.

Here with the suddenness of enchantment the scene changed. The gloom was broken by a dart of sunshine, blue shone overhead, and in a moment the mists lifted on all sides, disclosing a view of the most dazzling beauty. We were on a green hillside opposite the mouth of Val di Genova, which was flanked on one side by the Presanella, the victim of yesterday's onslaught, on the other by the Carè Alto. These were the outposts of a vast amphitheatre of ice and snow, in the bend of which stood the Adamello.[1] Below us was a group of châlets at the head of a little glen, whose stream trickled down into the Sarca; beyond lay the whole Val Rendena, almost to Tione, a rich mass of verdure, dotted by frequent villages, and set off by the soft moulded mask of new-fallen snow which hid the hills down to the highest pine-forests.

Instead of following the stream we turned to the right and descended by a sledge-track to Baldino, a village twenty minutes below Pinzolo.

In after years I satisfied myself that the cliff we had turned back from was visible from the high-road at the upper end of the gorge of Le Sarche. The rocks seen from a distance did not look so formidable as they had from above. The pass, if it could be made, would be a very convenient one, leading directly from Campiglio to the Baths of Comano, and enabling a mountaineer to pass through the pinnacles of the Brenta Alta, and by means of a carriage reach Riva the same

[1] We may possibly have mistaken the Dosson di Genova or Corno Bianco for this peak.

evening; and there still remained sufficient doubt about the ascent on the south-east side to render the problem interesting.

Ten years later I mustered some friends and François at the Baths of Commo. We enquired of the master of the house for a porter acquainted with the paths in Val d'Ambies. Such a valley, however, was unknown, at least by that name, to all the inmates of the establishment. This, considering the vague state of the mountain nomenclature in this district, was not wonderful. We were more surprised when the existence of any valley between Val d'Algone and the Molveno cart-track was denied with persistent positiveness. At last a guest completely crushed our importunate enquiries by producing a map on which the valley we spoke of was not to be found. The map, it should be mentioned, was one of the Island of Sardinia!

Upon this we gave up the struggle, and contented ourselves with hiring a peasant to carry provisions to one of the villages on the rolling upland above the Baths, where we should at least be able to point out the mouth of the glen we meant to explore.

In three-quarters of an hour we had reached Tavodo, built on a brow immediately over the torrent of Val d'Ambies. Behind us lay the beautiful basin of Stenico, threatened by an advancing storm, through the skirts of which the low sun flung Titianesque lances upon the glittering orchards. In front the towers of the Cima Tosa were framed between two bold buttresses, the ends of the bounding ridges of our valley.

We had to cross a torrent and reascend to the neighbouring hamlet of San Lorenzo in order to obtain quarters for the night. There was no regular inn in

the place, but we found clean beds and cooking materials in the house over the village shop.

Our start next morning was unexpectedly delayed. We had agreed overnight with an elderly and loquacious inhabitant for the carriage of our provisions and a bag to the top of the pass for four gulden. Our porter's first act on appearing at six A.M. was to call for spirits; his second, to declare he must have five gulden to go not to the pass but to the highest 'malga.' His pretensions were increasing with his 'little glasses,' and in inverse ratio to his competency, when we cut the matter short by engaging another man.

We had got fairly off when the old Bacchanalian shuffled up in the rear and enlivened the first half-hour by an energetic declamation, in which the chief points seemed to be that he alone in the countryside knew every crag and cranny where we were going, that he was 'President of the Village' and a 'galantuomo,' and that, 'corpo di Bacco,' the least we could do was to pay his tavern score.

Above some saw-mills a good cattle-path mounted steadily along the left bank of a very slender stream. At the first bend in the narrow valley we had a good view of the barrier to be crossed. The gap we must aim at was clearly the second on the south-west of the mass of the Cima Tosa. We could recognise the very spot where François had halted that day ten years on the brink of the precipice. A hundred yards further south a fan-shaped snow-bed lay against the base of the abrupt crags. This snow must have fallen through some breach; and closer inspection showed a shadow on the face of the cliff—good proof that it was not so smooth as it looked, and that a hidden gully might be found at our need.

A long and steep ascent, like that of Val di Brenta, closes the lower glen.

Halfway up the barrier the path splits, and the traveller must either continue to climb steeply and afterwards traverse at a level the higher slopes, or recross the stream and remain in the valley. The upper basin is hemmed in by wooded cliffs, on the top of which lies a ring of pasturages, the base of the dolomite peaks which extend in a complete semicircle round the head of the glen. The sky-line of the range does not equal in boldness or eccentricity of form that of Val di Brenta; but, except where a high but obvious pass leads over towards Molveno, it presents to the eye a most formidable barrier.

As we approached the rock-wall clouds swept rapidly over it. François suggested dolefully that history was apt to repeat itself. But we knew enough already to be tolerably independent of weather. There were two bays in the cliffs before us, one to our right filled by a small glacier with which we had nothing to do, the other containing the fan-shaped snow-slope seen from below. A rough ascent over the last grass, snow and boulders led to the latter.

The steep snow-slope was hard-frozen and slippery, and altogether too much for our porter's powers. Like the schoolboy he went two steps back for each forward, and, as even turning his back to the slope proved ineffectual, we were constrained to shoulder his burden and let him go. Had it not been for his ludicrous incapacity to follow we should have had a long financial discussion; as it was, his murmurs at pay for which a Swiss porter would have been thankful, soon grew faint with distance. At the head of the snow-bed

we were met by an almost vertical rock; but a sharp scramble of fifty feet gave us the key of the pass.' On our right, slanting parallel to the cliff like a staircase to a castle-wall, and completely masked up to the present moment by a buttress, was a steep narrow snow-filled gully. While François was converting the hard snow into a convenient ladder, we watched with wonder and admiration the great red towers which broke out of the neighbouring mists. 'Pour moi je préfère votre maison de Parlement,' said our guide when we called his attention to the mountain architecture.

We gained the watershed a few yards to the south of the spot we had reached from the other side. The pass has two crests, one of rock, one of snow, with a bowl between them. The distant view was veiled; but the Presanella, rising through clouds opposite, proved that the chain was really crossed. Either side of the Bocca dei Camozzi was now open to us. We preferred to pass through the gap and follow the glacier of Val di Brenta, by which, descending at our leisure, we reached in good time the 'Stabilimento Alpino' of Campiglio.

Our first glimpse, in the summer of 1872, of the peaks of the Trentino was from the gap at the western foot of the Pizzo della Mare. As our heads rose above the ridge of pure snow which had hitherto formed our horizon, and we walked up against the hard blue sky, a well-known pinnacle shot up before us, and out of the great sea of cotton-wool cloud spread over the Italian hills and valleys rose the shining cliffs of the Presanella. Further from us the serrated outline of the dolomite range cut sharply against the clear upper heaven.

Familiarity never renders commonplace this marvellous climb. Seen from the Orteler group it is a gigantic wall crowned by square towers and riven in places to its base by mighty clefts. The breaches, despite their depth, are cut so narrow and so clean that fancy suggests that the elements must have borrowed some magic power with which to work such fantastic ruin.

It was partly the intention of scaling the Cima di Brenta, one of the loftiest towers of the dolomites, which was taking us for the third time to Pinzolo. So the mountaineers among us pulled out field-glasses and began at once to dissect the peak: to decide that this 'couloir' was snow and available, that 'arête' broken and useless; in short, to converse in that Alpine jargon which marks the race which Mr. Ruskin once thought capable of treating the Alps only as greased poles.

On the same afternoon we descended into the head of the great valley, which was the home of the 'Nauni feroces' of Horace's times, the highway to Italy of Charlemagne and Barbarossa. It now bears two names. The upper portion, where it is comparatively narrow, is called the Val di Sole, probably from its direction admitting both the sun's morning and evening rays; the lower, where the hills drop into broad-backed downs, preserves the memory of the ancient tribe in the titles Val di Non or Nonsberg. It is as a whole a wide sunny valley, rich in fields of maize and vines, and crowded with prosperous villages overlooked by the ruins of mediæval fortresses. Two of its side-glens, Val di Pejo and Val di Rabbi, penetrate deeply into the Orteler range, and the bath-houses they contain have a local fashion amongst the people of the hotter parts of the Trentino; but the accommodation is not such as

will tempt foreign visitors. To catalogue the bath-houses of the Ortler as Thackeray has inns, if Santa Catarina is the 'cochon d'or,' Rabbi is the silver, and Pejo the black animal, and I scarcely know where to find a blacker. Besides, the scenery accessible to any but very good walkers is not of a high order; the heads of the glens are wild and savage rather than beautiful, and their lower portions, though delightful to drive down for a mountaineer coming from the glaciers, would scarcely repay a separate visit. From Santa Catarina, Rabbi can only be reached by a long but most glorious march over the Monte Cevedale and Pizzo della Venezia;[1] Pejo, over the Pizzo della Mare, is a comparatively short journey, and the traveller will do well to escape from its slovenliness and discomfort by driving on to the junction of Val dei Monti and the main valley and the clean country inn at Fosino.

The walls of its chief room were some years ago adorned with a remarkable series of Bible pictures. One plate illustrated an unusual subject, the early life of Mary Magdalene, who was represented receiving the attentions of a moustache-twirling young officer in full Austrian uniform. It seemed doubtful whether a reflection was intended on military men in general, or whether the Milanese artist had taken this indirect means to insinuate the peculiar profligacy of his then rulers.

On the morning of the day succeeding our ascent of the Pizzo della Mare, we found ourselves at a tolerably early hour at the little village of Dimaro, a cluster of prosperous-looking farmhouses standing some distance off the high road, amongst quiet meadows, fields of tall

[1] See Appendix C.

maize and walnut-trees. Here the mule-path over the Ginevrie Pass leaves Val di Sole, and we had to abandon our car and look for a quadruped of some sort to help us over the hill. The only available mule had just come in from a hard morning's work, drawing down granite boulders to embank the bed of the torrent, and required some rest; its master also demurred on his own account to starting in the heat of the day. These hindrances, joined to the probable length of the journey, and the unanimous voices raised in favour of the hospice of Campiglio, made us reconsider our previous plan of pushing on to Pinzolo, and agree to trust to the hospitality of the 'ricco signor,' who had always meat in his house, and whose best room was as beautiful as any at Cles, or even Trento.

The inn at Dimaro is a very clean-looking little house evidently owned by tidy people. Some of us spent the midday hours in a siesta in a cool bedroom, with a row of bright flower-pots across the window, through which there came in to us glimpses of an atmosphere quivering with light, mingled with fresh sounds of rustling branches and running waters. The sunshine of the mountains is always full of life and freshness; it is only down in the stagnant plains that the midday heat burns like a dull furnace, drying up the energies alike of plants and men.

Meanwhile the agriculturist of the party found interest in watching the threshing in the barn below, where a dozen peasants—men, women, and girls—disposed in a circle, were wielding their short flails with incessant industry. At length the mule was rested. Its master did not at first seem likely to prove a pleasant addition to our number, for he declined to help

the guides by carrying a knapsack, resented strongly the suggestion that he should go to his animal's head, and discoursed gloomily on the difficulties and fatigues of the road. This strange conduct on the part of a Tyrolese peasant was accounted for by our companion's informing us that he had spent a year in Paris.

A mile of dusty cart-road leads to a bridge at the foot of the wooded rock which juts out from the dolomite range and blocks up the lower part of Val Selva. Steep zigzags carried us up through a picturesque tangle of trees and crags to where the road turns the northern corner of the huge promontory. A fair landscape of the romantic school now opened suddenly before our eyes. In front, and slightly beneath us, lay a wide green basin, through which the stream wandered peacefully towards our feet. Above its further end rose a sheer cliff, limestone or dolomite, fringed with dark pines. Beyond this valley-gate the eye wandered into the quivering Italian sky, imagining, if it did not see, further distances and a limitless extent of waving hills and wooded plains. On our right the ground rose in wave above wave of forest, in the recesses of which, the right track once lost, one might wander for hours without seeing any snowy landmark by which to steer a course.

The path traversed the stream, and then mounted gently along the western side of the valley, through glades where wild strawberries and bilberries flourished in rare profusion. After the foot of the cliff had been passed, higher mountains towered on the south, and glimpses of the strange red pinnacles and white waterless gullies of the Sasso Rosso were caught from time to time through the floating vapours that wreathed them.

A boundary stone marked the limit of the districts of Cles and Tione. As yet there was no sign of a watershed. In fact there appeared no reason why we need come to one at all. The ground rose sufficiently to hinder our seeing for any distance in advance, but still so gently that it might have gone on rising almost for ever. Deep boggy holes, which we crossed on causeways of decaying logs, while the ingenious mule picked his own way through the mud, interrupted the path. These were the difficulties of which our Parisian had warned us. Meantime the eastern range retreated further from us, and a stream flowed out from a broad valley at its base. At last the hillside sensibly steepened, and the forest grew less thickly. We overtopped the brow of the ascent and found ourselves on the edge of a vast undulating pasture. Barns and stables, too large to be called châlets, were sprinkled here and there. Frequent fences and gates suggested an English homestead. Sleek cows reposed contentedly on the grass, careless young heifers quarrelled and made it up again, while a couple of fussy donkeys raised a bray of welcome and galloped up to greet their half-brother in our train.

The highest point of the tableland of the Ginevrie Alp was our pass; from it the path dipped suddenly into a waterless dell. A few paces further brought us to the verge of the short steep descent whence we looked down on the meadows of Val Nambino and the tower of La Madonna di Campiglio. The path made a circuit to reach it, but we preferred a short cut, despite the warning of a priest who shouted after us that it was 'più pericoloso.'

Before we went to bed it was decided that the mountaineers should set off next morning with Henri

Devoussoud, a brother of the more celebrated François, in search of a route up the still maiden Cima di Brenta. Owing to various delays it was past five when we started. Our ideas as to the direction to be at first taken were rather crude, and had been rendered more so by the assurances of a German traveller we met overnight that there was no valley between the Val di Brenta and Monte Spinale.

Close to a second inn, a peasants' drinking-house, we left the road to Pinzolo for a terrace-path skirting the lower slopes of Monte Spinale. As we gradually turned the most projecting spur of the mountain, the lower portion of Val Nambino opened beneath us. The morning clouds were rapidly dispersing under the warm influence of the sun. High up in air, severed from the solid earth by a grey belt of yet undissolved mist, the great snow-plains of the Carè Alto shone in a golden glory such as that in which Mont Blanc veils himself when seen from a hundred miles' distance.[1] Thin vapours still clung round the dolomites of the Bocca di Brenta, making their strange forms appear still more fantastic. Thus far our path had been gradually descending. Now a valley opened exactly where we looked for it at the south-eastern base of Monte Spinale. A timber-slide, which, if in good repair, forms the most luxurious of mountain-paths, avoiding all inequalities of ground, bridging chasms and mounting by an almost uniform gradient, led us up the glen which is known

[1] This view is engraved as the frontispiece to the Jahrbuch for '69–70 of the Swiss Club; but the artist, fancying himself to have before him the snow-fields of the Lobbia Glacier, has gone hopelessly wrong in his identification of the peaks. His Crozzon di Lares is the Carè Alto, his Crozzon di Fargorida the Corno Alto, his Lobbia Alta the Corno di Cavento, and his Lobbia Bassa the Crozzon di Lares.

as the Vallesinella. Through breaks in the forest the glacier-crowned crags of the Cima di Brenta were now seen for the first time, followed on the north by an array of slender obelisks, beaks, and crooked horns, the strangeness of which would, but for a long experience in dolomite vagaries, have made us doubt our eyes. In the foreground a romantic waterfall, framed amongst woods of birch, beech, ash, and pine, dashed over the rocks. We could not but feel the contrast between such mountain scenery, where Nature seems to revel in the indulgence of her most poetical mood, and the dull formality of much we had lately been living amongst in eastern Switzerland. To me the Upper Engadine, with its long perspective of brown barren mountains leading to an ignoble termination, suggests irresistibly the last Haussman boulevard. Yet while the choicest spots of the Italian Tyrol remain deserted, fashion crowds the bleak shores of St. Moritz, and finds a charm even in the swamps of Samaden.

On a knoll above the waterfall stands a group of châlets. We were attacked in passing them by a gigantic dog, armed with a collar bristling with iron spikes. But for our ice-axes our expedition might have been brought to an untimely end. As it was, we stole a flank march on the foe, while Henri occupied his attention with a blow on the nose which indisposed him to follow up our retreat. The timber-slide we had lately followed comes down from the furthest corner of the recess at the back of Monte Spinale, whence an easy pass leads into the Val Teresenga, a lateral glen of Val di Sole, parallel to Val Selva.

Under the châlets a bridge crosses the stream, and a path mounts steeply the opposite hillside. We, by

keeping too long beside the water, missed the track. While forcing our way back to it over the slowly decaying trunks, and amongst the rich ferns and weeds, we were tempted for a moment to fancy ourselves in a wilder land. Alas! the woodcutter's axe is already busy on these slopes, and they will not long retain their robes of primeval forest.

The path regained, a well-marked zigzag led us to the broad crest of the ridge dividing Val Brenta from the Vallesinella. There is probably no spot in the neighbourhood—not even excepting Monte Spinale—which commands so general, and at the same time so picturesque, a view. On three sides the ground falls rapidly towards Val Nambino and its tributary glens. Full in front of us stood the defiant tower of the Cima Tosa, with the two Boccas on either side of it. We could trace every step of our ascent to the Bocca dei Camozzi, an expedition in some respects even more singular than the Bocca di Brenta, and one which will in time become well known to travellers. Beyond the valley rose the comparatively tame forms of the granite range. Nearest to us was my old conquest, the Presanella, the highest summit of the whole country; further south, the upper snows of the Lares and Lobbia glaciers spread in a great white curtain between the Carè Alto and Adamello. Behind Monte Spinale the circle of mountains was completed by the dolomites of Val Selva.

Our path forked on the crest, one branch descending to a chûlet perched on a shelf immediately overlooking the green plain at the head of Val Brenta. From this alp a footpath of some kind leads down to the track of the Bocca—a fact to be borne in mind by future travellers

who wish to see in a day as much as possible of the scenery of the dolomites without crossing the pass to Molveno. We followed an upper track, skirting the southern base of a group of rocky pinnacles, on the highest of which stands a withered pine-stem, perhaps planted there by some agile shepherd. Before long the path came to an end in a rocky hollow immediately at the base of the precipices of the Cima di Brenta. Their appearance, had we not learnt from afar something of their secrets, would have been sufficiently forbidding. Over the gap by which we were about to recross into the head of Vallesinella shot up an astonishing dolomite, a facsimile of a Rhine castle, with a tall slender turret, perhaps 300 feet high, at one corner. Once across the ridge, the climber turns his back on all green things, and enters on a stony desert. He is within range of the mountain batteries, and in a fair position to judge of the havoc caused when frost and heat are the gunners. Overhead tower sheer bastions of red rock; the ground at their base is strewn with fragments varying in size from a suburban villa to a lady's travelling-box. A dripping crag, with a scanty patch of turf beside it, offered all that was wanted for a halting-place. We were now overlooking the lower portion of the deep trench, filled higher up by glacier, which divides the Cima di Brenta from the rock-peaks to its north. Through it a pass, a worthy rival of the Bocca di Brenta, and leading like it to the Val delle Seghe, has been discovered by Mr. Tuckett.

A short distance above us was the glacier-covered breach by which we felt confident the fortress might be won. To reach the level of the ice we climbed under the base of an almost overhanging cliff, and then across

a boulder-strewn shelf. Mounting the sides of the glacier by a ladder of steps kicked in the snow which still covered them, we quickly reached and left below precipices and pinnacles which a short time before had looked hopelessly near the sky. At the top of the steep ascent lay a miniature snow-plain, surrounded by steep broken crags. From its further end a sort of funnel fell through the cliffs overhanging the Bocca di Brenta.

The summits of the Cima di Brenta were at some distance to the left, and it seemed possible there might yet be difficulties in store for us. The steep faces of rock fronting the south offered good hold for feet and hands, and discarding the rope we took each of us his own path. In a quarter of an hour we came to a broader part of the mountain, and surmounted in succession two snowy cupolas. The second looked like the summit, but on reaching it we saw a still higher crest beyond. Between us and it was a gap, on the north side of which lies a glacier which soon curls steeply over and falls upon the larger ice-stream at the base of the mountain. A short scramble, down and up again, brought us to the real top—a ridge of shattered crag nearly level for some distance. From here our eyes should have feasted on a view of rare beauty over the rich valleys of the Trentino to the rival peaks of Cadore and Primiero, down upon the deep-lying waters of Lago di Garda, and northwards over the snowy ranges of Tyrol. But our ill-luck in distant views that season followed us to the last. Dark clouds, the forerunners of a thunder-storm, had already wrapped the distant mountain tops, and fleecy vapours choked up the valleys at our feet. Nothing was clear but our own peak and the Cima Tosa, the huge mass of which now scarcely overtopped us by

the height of its final snow-cap. We waited long and patiently for some friendly breeze to lift even a corner of the white carpet which concealed from us all that lay at the base of the precipices on the Molveno side. We prayed in vain; the weather changed only for the worse, and we did not care to risk a meeting with the thunder-cloud.

The storm which broke on us during the descent prevented any attempt to vary the morning's route until we reached Val Nambino, when we turned off to the left, and hurried down to rejoin our companions at Pinzolo.

Val Selva, though the shortest, is not the only tolerably easy means of access from Campiglio to Val di Sole. To the left from the Ginevrio Pass a path branches off to the Passo delle Malghette, and leads in six hours to Pelizzano; to the right another track leads over at the back of Monte Spinale to the Flavona alp—a high pasturage at the head of Val Teresenga, one of the few valleys in the Alps six hours in length which have escaped the all-seeing eyes of the author of the 'Alpine Guide.'

The Passo di Grostè is sometimes ascended by visitors to Campiglio as the nearest spot whence it is possible to look eastward over the Trentino. The rocks fall away from the top towards the Flavona Alp in a series of advancing courses of massive masonry, like the sides of a Greek theatre. Without local guidance, it is easy for a solitary traveller to get into difficulty amidst the maze of low cliffs.

The upper châlet of the Flavona Alp stands in the middle of a broad sloping pasturage overlooked by the

bold cliffs of Monte Fublan and connected on the further side by an easy shepherds' pass with Val Sporeggio. Another 'Bocca' lately brought to light leads under the cliffs of the Cima di Brenta to the Val delle Seghe and Molveno. We must now, however, follow the water, which carries us down into one of the strangest recesses of the Alps. Our guide will soon desert us. For the greater part of its length Val Teresenga has no stream and no channel for one to run in. Where by every precedent there should be a level trough, we find nothing but a confusion of high-piled mounds. Mountains have fallen and blocked up this glen with their ruins, and one's impulse, unscientific it may be, suggests an earthquake as the only adequate cause for so extraordinary a cataclysm.

The open alps lie high up on the sunny shoulders of the Sasso Rosso and Sasso Alto; the depths are clothed in dense forests rich with a rank undergrowth of ferns and flowers, and, still more welcome to dry-throated travellers, of wild fruit. One Saturday afternoon, when the woodcutters and their families who visit the glen in summer were on their way down to spend a holiday at their villages in Val di Non, we met at least 200 people, scarcely one of whom was without a basket filled with billberries, strawberries and raspberries.

Suddenly a new colour shines through the branches, and we reach the shore of a large circular sheet of water hemmed in on every side by cliffs and woods. By such a solitary pool might old Saturn have sat,

> Forest on forest hung about his head,
> Like cloud on cloud.

In the centre the water is dark blue as an Egyptian night; round the rim fallen pine-trunks are strewn in

disorder along the bottom and dye the border of the lake the deepest red.

Below the lake smooth, wall-like cliffs threaten the valley, and huge rock-slips again bury the stream, giving by their rough unclothed surface an air of desolation to the landscape. When the water suddenly gushes out, a noble fountain, half its waters are at once seized and imprisoned afresh in stone channels, which are soon seen high up on opposite sides of the glen running boldly along the face of vertical cliffs to carry refreshment to the upper slopes of Val di Non.

The cart-road descends rapidly through a deep and narrow gorge which, after making a sharp angle, opens into the noble expense of the great valley a mile below Tuenno, and three or four below Cles. The high-road would soon carry us down to the Adige and the railway-station of San Michele. But we have yet to see the Lago di Molveno and the back of the Brenta.

At the eastern base of the dolomitic chain, more than 7,000 feet below its crowning crags, lies a deep trough, bounded on the further side by the crest of Monte Gazza, which, descending in steep cliffs into the valley of the Adige, slopes more gently towards the west. A considerable portion of this depression, the waters of which are turned in opposite directions by a a low bank traversing its centre, is filled by the Lago di Molveno, one of the largest of high Alpine lakes. A strong stream flowing from the Val delle Seghe is its principal feeder, and, strange to say, it has no visible outlet. The village of Molveno, situated at the head of the lake, is the natural head-quarters for the exploration of the neighbouring mountains. Its situation, at a height of 3,000 feet above the sea, and close to peaks of nearly

11,000 feet, is so attractive, that if reasonable accommodation were provided it would become a favourite halting-place for travellers. At present it is almost completely unknown.[1]

The tracks to Molveno most frequented by the country people are those from the gorge of the Rocchetta in Val di Non and from the valley of the Sarca, near the Baths of Comano. We shall choose the northern.

We had spent a day of continuous downpour in driving down the Val di Non, and it was already late afternoon when our dripping omnibus deposited us in front of the wayside inn which marked the turning-point of the path to Val di Spor and Molveno.

As we wound up the steep hill the last clouds blew over, and wide views opened on all sides over the rich gentle slopes of the Nonsberg, covered with white villages, whose wet walls and roofs glittered in the slanting sunshine. Before long Spor itself came into sight, lifted high on a healthy hillside and capped by a picturesque castle. The sound of its sonorous church bells followed us far on our way. Hereabouts we left the cart-road and followed a shorter track under the castle-crag and along the eastern hillside to the village of Cenedago. Hence a short ascent over meadows, gorgeous in June with tiger-lilies, leads to the watershed, and the path, passing a pine-girt pool, begins almost imperceptibly to descend before Andolo is reached and the road rejoined. Our way now followed the right bank of the Bior brook, through woods above whose tree-tops tall dolomite pinnacles shot up against the sky. The forest soon thickened, and, although the

[1] Six Englishmen visited it in 1873; of these my own party supplied three, a fourth was a friend whom I directed thither.

ground no longer rose in front, shut out all view in the direction of Molveno, until on a sudden a corner was turned, and at the end of a long dark-green vista,

Lo! the shining levels of the lake.

confined on one side by a steep brow, on the other by the bold buttresses of the Brenta group. Far away to the south, seen through a space of air still aglow and quivering with the late sunbeams, rose the rounded crests of the hills above Riva. Close at hand, to be reached by some well-made zigzags, lay Molveno village on the shore of its lake and beside a little bay of singular beauty, shut in between steep banks and spanned at its mouth by a wooden bridge. The whole picture recalled some imaginative landscape of a great painter rather than any other Alpine scene.

We would willingly have lingered before it. But the sun had already set, and it was necessary to seek food and shelter without delay.

We were led to an irregular open space, which, despite its fountain, did not venture to call itself a piazza, and into a low, broad, dark entry, where among a litter of carts and logs we sat down while the guides sought the people of the inn. They were already half asleep, and came down with bewildered looks to tell us that there was no food in the house, but fish—yes—in the lake. Had not our own supplies fortunately furnished supper we should have fared but poorly. Nor did the accommodation promise well. Orcus itself can scarcely have a blacker portal than that which yawned for us on our way to the upper floor. The walls were coated with layer upon layer of soot and smoke, each so thick that the only reasonable theory seemed to be that in some

alteration of the premises the original chimney of the house had been turned into the staircase without any preliminary cleansing. The bedrooms upstairs proved better than such an approach had led us to expect. It was an illustration of the primitive and trustful manners of the place that my bed and the next were separated by a baby's cot, the tenant of which, thus abandoned to our tender mercies by its parents, wisely refrained from expressing any emotion, and was not even discovered until morning.

The access from Molveno into the heart of the Brenta chain is by the Val delle Seghe—the valley of the saw-mills, the torrent of which discharges itself through a considerable delta into the lake a quarter of a mile south of the village. This glen is narrow and shut in by magnificent smooth, red cliffs of great height shooting out of dense beech forests. After penetrating three or four miles due west, rising steeply all the time, it abruptly terminates in a basin enclosed by the wildest crags. The two streams which here meet fall from recesses lying north and south, and giving access respectively to the Bocca di Vallazza, a pass leading to the high pasturages at the head of Val Tersenga, and to the more famous Bocca di Brenta. Between the two a third pass, discovered by Mr. Tuckett, leads directly to Campiglio by the Vallesinella.

We left Molveno by starlight, and dawn had but just bared the sky when we turned up the rough hill-side leading to the Bocca di Brenta. The track at first climbed so steeply through the dewy forest that we were often glad to catch at a branch or root to ease the strain. The pasturage above is the Malga dei Vitelli, and the calves and the boys who tend them can afford to dis-

pense, with zigzags. The mothers of the herd are in more luxurious quarters, chewing the sweet herbage of the Flavona Alp or wandering over the broad ridges of Monte Gazza.

On a sudden the tip of the rock opposite us glowed as if with ruddy flame; for a few seconds every pinnacle was of the same colour, then the whole sun reached them, and over the solemn greens and greys of the lower earth the mountain rampart flashed out gorgeous with light and colour. The red gold assumed at sunrise by rocks of this formation may be better realised by a glance at Turner's 'Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus' (No. 523 in the National Gallery), than by reading pages of description.

Nowhere does a climber's attempt appear more ambitious and hopeless than in a dolomite country. The broken crags serve as scales by which to measure distance and emphasise height. There is none of the encouraging but deceitful monotony of snow-slopes. Yet as, ourselves still untouched by the sun's rays, we steadily mounted our treadmill path, huge towers which half-an-hour before had seemed sky-piercing, sank beneath us and gave place to another tier rising far overhead. At last the battlements were reached and the snowy breach of the Bocca opened on the right. But the pass did not satisfy our ambition, and we told Nicolosi to lead us against the keep itself. Passing round a rocky corner, we found ourselves for the first time facing the huge mass of the Cima Tosa. Two fields of ice lying at different levels clothed its shoulders, over which rose a bold head of rock. Below and behind us lay a strange tableland pierced by a deep punchbowl, empty as if it had been recently

drained in a witches' Sabbat. But its singularity did not long detain our eyes, for in the east, far as the eye could reach, shone range behind range of deep-toned mountains, and the memory wandered to past summers as we counted over again the noble roll of the Venetian Alps.

The Cima Tosa is everywhere cliff-girt, and it is difficult to decide where to attack it. The spot where we approached it did not look more tempting than others. But Nicolosi had the advantage of experience, whereby we gained confidence and lost excitement.

To avoid a burning sun, we lunched in the cave between the ice and rock. After a few yards' scrambling the foot of an absolute wall was reached. Its height may be estimated by the fact that our rope, sixty feet long, just sufficed to pull a man up the whole of it. It was therefore some ten feet less than the rope. But although practically perpendicular throughout, and at the top even considerably overhanging, so much so that in descending I tried in vain, sitting on the edge, to watch the progress of my predecessor, it was not dangerous or even difficult. Leave on any wall bricks projecting throughout and send a man to the top of it with a rope, it is no hard matter for any one of moderate activity and nerve to follow. No strain may be put on the rope round your waist, yet it is a sort of moral banister which places one completely at one's ease.

This crag scaled, the rest of the way, though steep, proved easy. The rope was left, and we scrambled as we liked up alternate rocks and snow-beds until the final snow-dome of the mountain was gained.

The view resembled in general character those from the Adamello summits, except that the neighbouring

snow-fields hid the Swiss Alps, and in revenge the upper end of Lago di Garda lay, a blue polished sheet, beneath the broad back of Monte Baldo.

The neighbouring tower or buttress, so noble from the Val di Brenta, was now a stone's throw below us. Its top may some day be reached, but there is a gap to be crossed, and the Matterhorn has not more awful precipices. A long trough, filled with the snows which break off year by year from the mountain crest, falls 3,000 feet, at an almost uniform angle, on to the Val di Brenta side of the Bocca. A party of steady, patient men with ice-axes might mount or even descend it in safety, but it is a place where haste or carelessness would mean broken necks.

It is easy to return by the ordinary route to the corner whence the peak was first seen, and then traverse ledges to the top of the Bocca. The way from the pass to the plain beneath the great tower lies along the bottom of a trough, snow-filled and steep above, then more level and grassy. The last descent is made by a stony zigzag on the right-hand side of the cleft. Run down it as swiftly as you may, and then fling yourself on your back among the creeping pines and look up straight into the sky, where more than 4,000 feet overhead the vapours meet and part round the astounding rock-tower which shoots up solitary and unsupported until its top is lost in the sky. Nowhere in the Alps will you gain so strong an impression of sheer height.

Then careless of 'times,' and leisurely, as if your sinews had not been strung up by a severe climb, loiter through the strawberry-beds and linger at the 'malghe' until the sun shines only on the great Lares snow-

fields, and the lower world is cool in shade and rich in colour.

When as you stroll down to Pinzolo or up to Campiglio you think over the impressions of the day, we shall surely agree that the Brenta group are as 'Delectable Mountains' as any Alpine pilgrim need sigh for.

THE PRIMERO DISTRICT.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PASSES OF PRIMIERO.

Past those jagged spires, where yet
Foot of man was never set;
Past a castle yawning wide,
With a great breach in its side,
To a nest-like valley.—J. INGELOW.

The rede is ryfe that oftentime
Great clymbers fall unsuft.—SPENSER.

THE LOWER PASSES—PANEVEGGIO—SAN MARTINO DI CASTROZZA—THE PATHS TO AGORDO—VAL DI SAN LUCANO—PASSO DI CANALE—PASSO DELLE COSTELLE—PASSO DI TRAVIGNOLO—CIMA DI VEZZANA.

SOME time since a nineteenth-century Arthur, an enemy of shams moral or mountainous and a President of the Alpine Club, wandering beyond his usual bounds, found himself suddenly in the presence of a bevy of formidable giants. Accustomed though he was to such encounters, the prodigious stature of these monsters, their impenetrable armour, and perhaps more than all the weird cruelty of their appearance, as with flame-tipped crests they stood up in a mighty line against the sunset, made such an impression on his mind that on his return, instead of calling on his Round Table—the Alpine Club—to overthrow the untamed brood, he solemnly warned them as they valued their lives to let it alone.

The warning was of course ineffectual. One of the

youngest knights rushed to the spot, went straight at the very tallest and most repulsive of the giant family, and returned victorious after an encounter, brief it is true, but of the most deadly character. Their prestige thus rudely shaken, others of the giants fell tamely enough, and but two or three still remain, owing perhaps their prolonged escape as much to their remoteness as to their individual terrors.

So far as I am concerned I have no such thrilling tale to tell as that recorded by Mr. Whitwell in the 'Alpine Journal'[1] of the ascent of the Cimon della Pala. On the only two occasions when I have come near the giants of Primiero circumstances have hindered me from doing much more than seek to detect the weak points in their harness; to abandon a somewhat strained metaphor, to make passes. For although I have been successful in reaching the second in height of these summits, this was, as it proved, little of a mountaineering feat compared to the passage of the gap beside it.

Passes have, however, for the general tourist more practical if less poetical interest than peaks. I shall not scruple therefore to devote some pages to the tracks which lead either round or across this singular group.

The mountain-knot which raises its wellnigh perpendicular masses behind Primiero may be compared to a horseshoe from which protrude spikes of irregular length. The easiest paths, the only ones practicable for beasts of burden, wind round the base of the protuberances; the higher passes, fit for shepherds or foot-travellers, penetrate the recesses between the lofty spurs and cross the horseshoe itself. The former are not the least fascinating.

[1] *Alpine Journal*, vol. v. p. 111.

For this country owes its wonderful beauty in great part to the constantly recurring contrast between the tall bare cliffs of the great rock islands and the soft forms of the green hills which like a sea roll their verdurous waves between them. Round the peaks of Primiero lies a region of wide-spreading downs, scarcely divided from each other by low grassy ridges; of forest-clad vales where the rich soil nurtures a dense undergrowth of ferns and moisture-loving plants. The huge crests of the Sass Maor or the Cimon della Pala never look so wonderful as when, seen from among the rhododendrons and between the dark spires of pine, their 'rosy heights come out above the lawns.'

It may perhaps be thought that I might well have passed over as described by former travellers the two main lines of traffic by which the people of the country communicate with their neighbours of Val Fassa and Agordo. But the account given of these passes by Messrs. Gilbert and Churchill seems to me to have been damped by the bad weather which those energetic explorers met with in this neighbourhood; and the pages of subsequent travellers have added but little to their report. Moreover, the times marching on, even at Primiero, have made many changes and smoothed away many obstacles, and thus rendered more or less obsolete the tales of even a few years ago.

The greatest of these changes is the new carriage-road which has lately been constructed from Primiero to Predazzo, in Val Fassa. From Primiero to the top of the pass it is finished in 'the well-known style' of an Austrian military highway; the descent through the forest to Paneveggio is not as yet equally solidly con-

structed,[1] but the whole road is perfectly safe and easy for spring-carriages.

The inns along the way (there are now three in the space of an eight hours' drive) have shared the fortunes of the road. At San Martino di Castrozza an hotel to contain twenty bedrooms has just been built, and will be opened next summer. The situation, 5,000 feet above the sea, amidst luxuriant meadows but at the very base of the greatest peaks of the country, is, so far as I know, unequalled amongst the dolomites. A new inn of more modest capacity has been erected on the very crest of the Pass. Paneveggio, once the rudest of peasants' houses of call, now furnishes ample if homely fare, and boasts at least one comfortable bedroom.

Val Fassa ends, and the country under the spell of the Primiero peaks begins, where the new road, having toiled up a green hillside to the little chapel and hamlet of La Madonna della Neve, bends at a level round the base of a flat-topped block of rock and pines which lies across the valley and cuts off the 'Forest of Paneveggio' from the outer world.

Those who have seen mountain forests in their virgin splendour amongst ranges moistened by more abundant rains and heated by stronger suns must ever after feel that, beautiful, nay incomparable, as the Alps are in many respects, in this one they distinctly fail. Even setting aside the ravages of man, Alpine forests can hardly have equalled in richness and variety those of the more southern ranges, such as the Himalayas, and Caucasus, which seem the paradise of the vegetation of the temperate zone. But the axe, in the

[1] This part of the road was being remade in September 1874.

hands of Swiss and Italian peasants, has been used with equal stupidity and effect. The barrier interposed by nature between the valley and the impending avalanches has been destroyed, the foliage which caught and distributed the rain-storms has been hacked away. For the sake of an immediate gain, the ignorant villagers have left their homes open to the rushing snows of spring; their saturated hillsides and meadows to be torn up by the autumn rains.

The 'Forest of Paneveggio' is interesting as an almost solitary specimen of a district where sensible forest laws have been for some time in force, and where in consequence the pine-woods are, for general luxuriance and for the size attained by single trees, amongst the finest in the Alps. The trees are periodically thinned, and wherever a patch has been cleared young pines are at once planted, and the space enclosed so as to protect the tender tops against cattle. Let us hope that the exertions of many intelligent men both in Switzerland and Italy may induce the peasantry in other districts to follow the wise example set by these southern Tyrolese.

The hospice of Paneveggio stands on a sloping meadow on the right bank of the Travignolo. It is a plain massive building, one of those raised in bygone years as resting-places and refuges for the people of the country on the long roads through the wildernesses separating their scattered hamlets. Across the stream rise the steep, green sides of Monte Castellazzo. Guiribello, a model 'casera' or mountain-farm, the property of an Austrian archduke, lies high on one of its upper shelves. On either side of this promontory flow the sources of the Travignolo, one gathering itself

in a wide basin under the passes to San Martino and the Laghi di Colbricon, the other flowing out of a deep dell at the immediate base of the Pala and Vezzana, both peaks of 11,000 feet, and, next to the Marmolata, the highest summits of the dolomite country.

The high-road, soon crossing the latter stream, winds in long, shady zigzags through the forest, and then reaches broad, sweet-scented pastures lying on the shoulder of Monte Castellazzo, and overhung by the thin wedge of the Cimon della Pala.

The Costonzella Pass is a mere grassy bank, from which a gradual descent over open alps leads to San Martino. The great peaks are almost too near for picturesque effect, unless when clouds partially veil them, filling the place of foreground. Then the spectacle of the top of the Cimon breaking through a mist might be enough to frighten a nervous traveller, who may naturally expect it the next moment to topple over on his head.

Pedestrians who are not afraid of distance, especially those going towards Primiero, will do well to abandon the high-road. From the hospice of Paneveggio a track mounts along the main branch of the Travignolo, and passing in succession before the precipices of the Fuoco-bono, the Vezzana, and the Pala, and leaving on the left the glacier which descends between the two latter peaks, crosses the back of Monte Castellazzo near the foot of the Pala, and rejoins the high-road. Lovers of Alpine tarns should cross it at right angles and take a track which, starting from the highest chalet on the northern side of the carriage-pass, leads over the broken slopes of Monte Cavallazzo to the Laghi di Colbricon, two blue lakes framed by green fir-clad mounds, over which

peer the crests not only of the great Pala but of the more distant Rosengarten and Marmolata. The upper lake lies on the lowest pass between the head-waters of the Cismone and the Travignolo. The descent towards San Martino is at first steep; the mule-track lies some distance to the right, but a foot-path a few yards to the left of the lake leads down at once into a picturesque glen. At the foot of the second descent is a 'casern' standing on a green lawn. Seen from this point the great turret-crowned wall is like a vivid but impossible dream of mountain splendour. The sweeping outlines of dark forest form a foreground out of which its rigid flame-coloured ramparts rise like some phantom castle against the Italian blue.

A short walk over hay meadows leads to San Martino di Castrozza, a chapel standing near a substantial building formerly used as a hospice and frontier station, but lately converted into an Alpine 'pension.' It stands on a level meadow near the point where the stream, hitherto tranquil, makes a sudden plunge southwards. Immediately behind the house rises the giant row of Primiero peaks. From the Pala to the Cima Cimedo the whole line is in sight from top to bottom, and the only fault of the view, if it can be called one, is that we are too near the mountains. At Campiglio we long to approach the peaks; here we draw back on to the opposite hillsides, where we may break their outline and see but one or two at a time between the nearer brows.

But a more delightful halting-place I cannot imagine, whether for climbers or idlers. At hand are many easy and shady strolls, and two or three hours places you on the top of the great wall free to climb its crests

and explore all the mysteries of the weird tableland which lies behind it. To the south the Sass Maor and Palle di San Martino raise their unconquered, but probably conquerable, peaks. The former at any rate may best be attacked from this side. The road to Primiero sinks in a long descent, terraced along the right-hand hills, and commanding superb and constantly shifting views of the opposite chain.

The path from Agordo, still the most frequented, though no longer since the construction of the carriage-road to Predazzo the easiest, approach to Primiero, has often had injustice done to it in many ways. It has been described on the one hand as shorter than it really is, on the other as a difficult and rugged track; and little justice has been done in any quarter to its great and varied beauty.

Average walkers must allow for the pass seven hours of very 'actual walking,' excluding all those 'petites haltes' which Toppfer justly counted amongst the happiest moments of life, the five or ten minutes' rest in the shade to admire a view or drink a cup of cold water. But for the whole way there is a good mule-path, although, as on almost all mule-paths, there are pieces which no one with the free use of his limbs would by preference ride down. One of the most tiresome of these rough places is the steep hill under the castle of La Pietra. But this the foot-traveller may easily avoid, and at the same time gain some superb views. On leaving La Fiera he will have to cross the river, and pass through the village of Transacqua, one of the cluster which form Primiero, then to climb a very steep little track up the hill immediately behind until he reaches a terrace-path running nearly at a level along the moun-

tain-side. From the first corner one looks back for the last time on the lake-like valley, with its islands of villages and waves of Indian corn. The path then bends along a shelf of meadows, with the whole chain of the dolomites in full view opposite. Further the shelf broadens to a crescent-like plain dotted with châlets lying immediately above the castle of La Pietra, and looking over Count Welsberg's park and away into the heart of Val Pravitale and Val di Canale. Hence a short descent leads back into the regular road above the stoniest part of the ascent, and about halfway between the castle and the pass.

A little inn, supplying drinkable wine, stands on the further side of the ridge. For the next two hours the path leads through scenery of a large and noble aspect. Deep below lies a valley, narrowing to a savage gorge before it releases its stream to flow out into the sunny meadows of Val di Mel. Above its head a broad-shouldered isolated mountain, known by the simple name of Il Piz, towers high into the air.

The first village in Venetia, conspicuous by a large new church, offers itself for a midday halt. A grassy slope leads thence to the crests of the wooded ridges which divide the glens sloping towards Agordo. Numerous paths wander about their tops, and unless the first left-hand track is taken it is easy to miss the way amongst them. This leads down into Val Sarzana, a long but pleasant glen, supporting several villages, and opening nearly opposite the little town of Agordo.

So much for those of the main tracks, of which I can speak from experience. The road down the valley to Feltre is still incomplete; other paths can be learnt

of from the 'Alpine Guide.' I must turn to the higher passages across the great horseshoe, which, if not absolutely unknown, were in any case known only to a few goatherds and hunters before the expeditions here described.

On the morning of May 30, 1864, a strange arrival disturbed the quiet of the little mountain town of Agordo, and collected what might pass for a crowd on the piazza, which in England we should call a green. Soon after nine A.M. the strangers who were the cause of this unusual stir issued from the inn door in an armed procession —four Englishmen, headed by a Swiss and a Savoyard, the two latter girt with rope. Each individual brandished a formidable axe. The native mind was by no means satisfied with the explanations offered by the strangers, and (as our guides afterwards told us) rushed to the conclusion that we were a party of diggers wandering over the mountains to seek spots favourable for mines, and that our strange-looking implements must be for breaking rocks in search of gold. At the village of Taibon, some half-an-hour above Agordo, a path crosses the river and turns into a side-glen—the Valle di San Lucano. After-experience has confirmed our first impressions of this valley. It is one of the most imposing spots in this romantic region. The level bottom is dotted with pines and watered by one of those sparkling streams too rare in the Western Alps, which, content with their own station in life, do not seek notoriety by doing harm to their neighbours. On one hand the Valle di San Lucano rises in stupendous cliffs, in many places smooth and perpendicular as a newly-built wall, and capped by three massive towers. On the other is Monte Agnaro, a more broken and slightly less precipitous dolomite, its rugged face furrowed by numerous

clefts filled at this early season by beds of snow, the remains of spring avalanches. At the châlets of Col, an hour's walk from the high-road, the glen split into two branches, the one short and steep running up to the Forcella Gesurette, a grassy gap leading to Gares, the other a deep trench (sometimes called the Val d'Angoraz) penetrating deeply into the corner of the Primiero horseshoe and ending in a wild precipice-closed amphitheatre. A herdsman assured us that by following a path on the western slopes of Val d'Angoraz we might find a passage across the mountains, occasionally used by shepherds, but, as he added, over snow and superlatively 'cattivo.' The savage and uninviting character of the cliffs at the extreme head of the valley made us quite ready to follow his advice.

Our first start that morning had been from Belluno, and it was now approaching noon. Just torn from the languid luxury of Venetian gondolas and under the scorching influence of a midday sun we crept upwards but slowly, and the only eagerness displayed amongst us was in finding from time to time some plausible excuse for a halt.

Underwood slowly gave place to pines, and these in turn yielded to Alpine rhododendrons, amongst which our path came to an end. Several hours, however, had passed before we gained the limit of vegetation, and sat down on the rocks to consider our line of march over the snow-slopes which still separated us from the wished-for ridge. The wild cliffs of the Sasso di Campo, here and there nursing infant glaciers in their rough recesses, rose opposite. On the north stretched a wide elevated pasture, lying on the back of the Palle di San Lucano and the slopes of the Cima di Pape.

Once on the snow all our fatigue vanished before the delicious air, and our spirits shared the exhilaration. It was fortunate they did so, for the scouts of the party, who had pressed on to the apparent pass, found on the further side wide-spreading snow-fields, barred at a great distance by a rocky ridge. After studying the military map of Venetia (in which, as we afterwards found, all this region is laid down in the vaguest and most misleading manner), we determined to retrace our steps and make for a higher gap in the ridge on our right. This was a mistake, for had we gone straight on we should have found ourselves, with hardly any further ascent, on the edge of Val di Canale,[1] near the spot we afterwards reached by a most circuitous route.

On gaining this second depression we saw more slopes between us and the ridge which now seemed to be the watershed. The third pass in its turn proved only a gap in one of the numerous low spurs running across the great tableland which lies at the back of the rim of peaks seen from the valley of the Cismone.

We were now in the very heart of this huge stony wilderness. In every direction stretched an undulating expanse of whitish-grey rock, brittle in substance and pockmarked by weather. Strange snow-filled pits here and there broke the monotony of the weird waste, which, but for these and its greater unevenness, resem-

[1] Canale is a frequent synonym for 'Valle' in the Venetian Alps, and travellers have been led to suppose that a fanciful analogy between the glens of the mountain provinces and the water-streets of the capital led to the use of the word. But 'canale' was used in the sense of valley before the period of Venetian rule, and it is found at the present day in mountain districts of the Apennines near Spezia, far removed from any Venetian influences. See Du Cange's 'Glossarium' for some curious details and quotations as to this word.

bled a rocky shore between low and high water-mark. But the impression of barrenness and desolation far exceeded what such a comparison will suggest; snow instead of water filled the crannies, and the life of sea-weeds and sea-creatures was altogether wanting in this middle realm of utter nakedness. There was too much sunshine for the glacier, too much frost for the flowers which began to find root scarcely 500 feet lower wherever the sun shone on a patch of disintegrated rock. Here there was nothing even for a chamois to nibble.

On the south the tableland was bounded by a line of snowy eminences, on the west by a fantastic cocks-comb of lofty crags, perhaps part of the spur of the Palle di San Martino. But the wide horizon to the north and east bore witness to the height on which we stood. Nothing impeded our view over the central dolomite region, and beyond it we recognised against the horizon the pale snowy line of the distant Tauern.

But the beautiful evening shadows already creeping over the view gave us cause for as much uneasiness as delight. We had started late from Agordo; time had flown by and it was within an hour of sunset, while we were yet far on the wrong side of the Pass. Not a moment was to be lost if we wished to sleep in the valley of Primiero. We wandered incessantly on over shoulders, down gullies, across wide basins of soft snow, until about sunset we stood at last on the edge of steep rocks falling away into a southern valley, the far-sought Val di Canale. A succession of snow-filled gullies rendered the descent easy, and enabled us to slide swiftly downwards for some 2,000 feet. When we reached the bottom of the glen daylight had already

left us, and the young moon, which threw romantic lights upon the huge pinnacles of the Sasso di Campo and Sasso Ortiga, disdained the humbler office of serving as a lantern to our path.

It was now so dark that we had to keep close together to avoid losing ourselves. After reaching a brow we too hastily began to swing ourselves down steep slopes by the tough branches of the creeping pines. There was a cliff at the bottom, and it was necessary to remount. Anyone who knows the difference between working upwards and downwards through such a thicket, even when fresh and by daylight, will sympathise with our despair. Yet despite slips, tumbles into holes, slaps in the face from swinging branches, we scrambled somehow up again. At the next attempt we got down with less difficulty.

In time we came to the bed of a torrent, here dry, as the water preferred a subterranean course; for half-an-hour more we stumbled along amongst the white boulders, every minute adding to our bruises. Then we fancied we had found a path, and got into thick woods on the left side of the glen. Soon the track, if it was one, was lost sight of, and we wandered off into deeper darkness than ever. At last we were brought to a dead halt. A steep step broke the valley, and cliffs, from the base of which the river sent up far distant murmurs, barred our progress. Whilst we were all engaged in beating about for any traces of a path, a shout was raised. We eagerly enquired the cause. 'I have got a native here, but I can't make him understand,' was the reply. We rushed to our friend's assistance, and found his native to be our German guide,

whom in the darkness he had taken for a shepherd, and was now cross-examining in his best Italian.

After this disappointment we resigned ourselves to the prospect of a night in the forest. A fire was soon lighted in the nearest sheltered hollow, and sufficient fir-branches cut down to form a bed. We should have been happy had any water been at hand, but two oranges divided between four were but poor relief to parched throats. As it was, we were disposed to reflect that the same moonlight which lit our sky was falling softly on the Piazza di San Marco, and to look back with fond regret on the ices and lemonade of Florian's. After a long absence François reappeared with the indiarubber bag, which usually held our wine, full of water. Then our cravings were satisfied, and we soon gave up watching the stars sparkling between the pine-branches and fell fast asleep.

Daylight, as usual, revealed an easy escape from the perplexities of the night, and we speedily found ourselves in the exquisite meadows surrounding Count Welsberg's shooting-box, and an hour later filed down the high street of La Fiera.

In 1864 'Alpinisti Inglesi' were unheard-of novelties at Primiero, and our procession filled every doorway with large wondering eyes, and roused conjectures wilder even than those of the Agordans. Some words of French spoken to François were caught by eager listeners, and it was currently reported in the little town that we were a party of French officers engaged in a surreptitious survey of the mountains. For the simple mountaineers could not believe that Napoleon's word would not yet be kept, and at least an

effort made to complete the work of 1859 and free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic.

No one, however, interfered with our siesta, or prevented us from leaving early in the afternoon for San Martino. Here, however, we found some officious person had given warning to the douaniers, and had not Tuckett's German been fluent and our passports in order, we should have no doubt had difficulty. As it was, we spent a very pleasant evening with the officials, who were glad enough of a little company, and invited us to join them in the circular chimney-corner which is the best, if not the only, invention which has come out of Tyrol.

The old hospice was as rough quarters as could well be found, and our beds did not interfere with early rising. Our object was to discover a pass leading directly to Gares and so to Cencnighe and Caprile. We had found it impossible to obtain any information overnight, but, as we were starting, a peasant on his way to Val Fassa offered to set us in the right path. We soon found, however, that he was leading us too far north, towards a far-away mule-track on the other side of Paneveggio. Much to our friend's surprise, therefore, we turned our backs on him and our faces towards the great wall of cliffs which rises immediately to the east of San Martino. A long climb through a fir-wood brought us to the bare crags. The only difficulty, if it can be called one, lies in hitting off the easiest point at which to pass a low cliff. Above this the way lies over steep slopes covered with loose rubbish. Three hours after leaving San Martino we stood on the crest close to the base of the Cima della Rosetta. The view to the west was very wide and beautiful. We looked over a

J. Gilbert del.

THE CIMON DELLA PALA AND CIMA DI VEZZANA.

foreground composed of mountains pasture-clothed to their summits, beyond which the snows of the Ortler and Œtzthaler groups, the towers of the Brenta, and the sharp peak of the Presanella shone in the distance. We were now on the further edge of the great waste we had wandered over two days previously, and in the centre of the rocky peaks which dominate it. Several of them appeared accessible. One, the Rosetta, is in fact only half-an-hour's easy scramble, and well rewards the trouble of an ascent by a delicious glimpse of the fertile fields of Primiero as well as a more extensive panorama.

At our feet was a deep hollow lying under the back of the Cimon della Pala. We descended into it, and found it the first of a series of basins connected by steep troughs, at this early season snow-filled, but later in the year, when the rocks are bare, steep enough to require some scrambling.

We were threading a defile among the mountain-tops. Sheer walls of cliff impended on one hand; on the other the rocks of the Cima di Vezzana towered aloft in forms of the utmost daring, yet too massive and sublime to suggest the epithet 'grotesque.' Here was rock scenery seen in its purest simplicity, with no variety or relief from its sternness except what it could itself afford in the shapes and colouring of the crags. It was a Val Travernanzes destitute of its only elements of life—verdure and water. In one of the lower troughs a slender stream took the place of snow as a covering for the rock-surfaces, and we were forced to get down as best we could by the side of and sometimes through the cascade. At the end of the last basin the stream entered a narrow gorge. There was still no

trace of path, and sometimes only just sufficient footing beside the water. We began to fear lest we might be trapped, when notched logs of wood placed as rough ladders against the rocks showed that some passage existed. Presently the opening of the gorge came in sight, and the opposing rock-walls gave space for an exquisite picture—the green slopes and rugged summit of the Cima di Pape bathed in a flood of sunshine. After plundering a bed of lilies of the valley (a rare flower in the Alps), we came to the brink of the cliff above the Gares valley. A log had been thrown across the water on the very edge of a waterfall. This rustic bridge was not substantial to look at, and too narrow for anything but Blondin or a monkey to walk over. We crossed it singly astride, and found on the other side a path which led us by a wide sweep round the rock-wall. This track recrosses the stream, still a mass of foam, beneath a fall which is perhaps the prettiest in the dolomite country. It then zigzags down rhododendron-covered slopes to the floor of the valley.

The village of Gares is perched on a knoll in the centre of a fertile basin and in full view of the green slopes of the Gesurette. Rugged cliffs form a complete barrier on the west, and the tiny gap from which we had emerged looked now the most unlikely entrance possible to a pass.

A haymaker of whom we enquired for an 'osteria' took possession of us and led the way to his cottage, where, having first hunted out benches and stools from all sorts of corners, he entertained us on milk, cheese, and butter. He knew of the existence of the pass we had crossed, but spoke of it as only used by chamois-hunters, and was unable to give it a name. Our host

was most unwilling to receive even a trifle for his hospitality. Beyond Gares the valley is open and less wild and savage than most of the neighbouring glens. It runs at first in a north-easterly direction along the base of the Cima di Pape, until at an hour's distance from Gares the Val di Valles, through which runs the mule-track of the Valles Pass to Paneveggio, opens on the left and the united streams bend due east to join Val d'Agordo. At the corner stands Forno dei Canali, the bakehouse of the valleys, a long straggling village which uses the only path for a drain, and sadly needs sanitary reform. We had to creep under the walls and jump from stone to stone to avoid the sea of filth. Just beyond the last houses Monte Civetta, more tower-like in form than usual, closes the view. A picturesque defile—where the river, which flows beside the road, was almost choked by logs on their voyage from the upper forest to the saw-mills—led down to Cencnighe, a short two hours below the lake of Alleghe and somewhat less from Agordo.

We have now twice crossed the great horseshoe. There remains a third passage, the only one unknown to the people of the country, across the deep narrow gap between the Cimon della Pala and the Cima di Vezzana. This pass—which, in virtue of the privilege of discoverers, I venture to call the Passo di Travignolo—leads from Paneveggio to Gares.

On a clear starlight evening in September 1872 our carriage, hired at an exorbitant rate from the inn-master at Vigo, drew up before the shining windows of the hospice of Paneveggio. My friend and I were unprovided with guides, not purposely or because no peasants fit to undertake such service were to be found

in the Venetian Alps, but from a combination of personal accidents. In the Alps only for a fortnight I had not thought it worth while to summon François Devouassoud from his far-off home. My friend, who had counted on the services of Santo Siorpaes of Cortina, had found him already engaged to a lady who had taken the first cragsman in Tyrol to lead her mule.

But the assurances we had received before leaving England that the untrodden crest of the Cima di Vezzana was likely to be attainable without serious difficulty encouraged us to persevere in our intentions against that mountain; and at the first opportunity we applied to the people of the inn to procure for us the best chamois-hunter of the neighbourhood to carry our provisions and to serve as a third on the rope. A peasant of stalwart size and manly bearing was soon produced who, by his professions of readiness to go anywhere, created a favourable first impression, weakened it is true, in my mind, by some slight suspicion that his 'anywhere' might be different to ours, and possibly mean anywhere he had been before. But for this doubt I had no foundation except the stubborn disbelief shown by our proposed companion in Mr. Whitwell's ascent of the Cimon della Pala. In such a discussion it is difficult to know how to act. To tamely leave a fellow-countryman's credit to take care of itself, with the precarious assistance of any stonemen he may have left behind him, is opposed to one's impulse. Yet the statement that an Englishman's word is above question loses its impressiveness when delivered with a consciousness that your assertions are at that very moment accepted as the strongest evidence to the contrary.

Shortly after five A.M. we were on the path which follows the eastern branch of the Travignolo. After some time the hills opened, the stream bent suddenly to the south, and wide grassy spaces extended along its banks. High against the sky the pale heads of the dolomites rose in a bare gigantic row. Above the end of the glen towered the gaunt form of the Cimon della Pala girt about his loins by a glacier, the only ice-stream in this group which makes a determined effort to descend into the valley. A grass-slope and a stone-slope led us to the ice, which rose in a steep and slippery bank. Higher up its more level surface was split by a few incipient crevasses, the largest of a size to engulf the heel of a boot or a torpid butterfly. Unluckily they did not escape the keen eyes of our hunter, and he proceeded to probe one of them with his staff. When he had done so his face assumed an air of singular resolution, and to our utter astonishment he informed us that the ice was hollow and that it would be madness to proceed. We of course pointed to the rope he carried on his shoulders. In vain; our philosopher briefly remarked that 'life was more than gulden,' and prepared to descend.

From our standpoint the whole upper glacier was in sight, a semicircular hollow open to the north-west, hemmed in elsewhere by the cliffs of the Vezzana and the steep broken face of the Pala. Between them lay a natural pass, approached on this side by a long bank of snow, between which and us the crevasses were evidently easy of circumvention. The day was cloudless. The path to a maiden peak was open. Should we follow the craven-hearted hunter? The suggestion, if made,

was not for a moment entertained. We roped ourselves together and turned our faces to the mountain.

I feel it well here to guard myself from the risk of being reckoned amongst those who would set up an example of 'mountaineering without guides.' We were in fact neither of us disposed to disregard the verdict of the Alpine Club. That verdict may be thus summarised—'Do not dispense with a guide except when and where you are capable of taking his place.'

An heretical but excellent climber, driven into revolt, perhaps, by some of the excesses of Grindelwald or Chamonix orthodoxy, once endeavoured to incite Englishmen to begin climbing by themselves. I quite agree with Mr. Girdlestone in disliking the passive position of the man who, having linked himself between two first-rate guides, leans on them entirely for support, moral and physical, under every circumstance.

This situation may be appropriate and even acceptable to the 'homo unius montis' who wishes once for all to do, or rather have done, his Wetterhorn or Mont Blanc. But for my own part I can never feel in it any of the pride of a mountaineer, or resist from comparing myself to the bale of calico which abandons itself to the force of a pulley in order to reach the top storey of the warehouse.

But in order to avoid this position it is surely not necessary, as Mr. Girdlestone would have us, to rush into the opposite extreme and do without guides altogether. Employing guides need not involve self-effacement. A guide may be looked to as a teacher instead of as a mere steam-tug; he may be followed intelligently instead of mechanically.

Although we may feel very far from, and may despair of attaining, the ideal of a mountain athlete embodied in an Almer, there is no reason why we should not endeavour to make some humble approach to it.

Let the traveller accustom himself to choosing his own line of march, practise his skill by steering through an easy bit of an ice-fall, cutting steps down a snow-bank, or taking the lead along a rock-ridge such as that of Monte Rosa. In this way he will, without much additional risk, test and improve his own skill, and may become in time capable of undertaking, without other company than that of similarly qualified friends, any expedition of moderate difficulty. Let it never be forgotten, however, that in sports as well as in trades an apprenticeship must be served. Forgetfulness of this fact has led to the worst of Alpine disasters, and it is by its tendency to ignore it that the doctrine of 'mountaineering without guides' is most dangerous.

In the present case we considered ourselves qualified to undertake the work before us; that is to say, we saw nothing to lead us to suppose that we were about to enter on ground where we could not tread safely, or on which a chance slip, should one occur, would not be remediable by such skill as we might have previously acquired.

The ice-chasms, some of them of formidable breadth, of the upper glacier were easily turned, and in a time which seemed short we came to the last of them, the great moat which ran round the base of the mountain. It was furnished with two bridges, one immediately under the centre of the snow-wall, over which any bodies falling from above would probably pass; the second, over which we crossed, somewhat

nearer the Pala. This steep bank, for most snow-walls are little more, may have been at a rough guess 800 feet high.

The snow, though in a very trustworthy condition, was a little too hard for speed, and my friend, who is an excellent step-cutter, found plenty of occupation for his axe. Some hour and a half had slipped by and we were still 150 to 200 feet below the crest, when a low bank of rock, parallel to the slope and lying along the base of the cliffs on our left, offered us an alternative path. We swerved towards them, not however without exchanging a reminder of the need of caution in crossing from snow to rock. An unusually capacious last step had been cut, and my friend had already attached to the crag all his limbs with the exception of one leg, when his whole body suddenly became subject to a struggle between the laws of gravity and the will of the climber. He had grasped a portion of the living rock which came away in his hand, for the first time, as if it had been the least stable of loose boulders. I had hardly time to close my axe in a tighter grip before my companion flew past me at a velocity of I cannot say how many feet to the second.

My foothold was too slight to resist any severe shock; the power of resistance lay in arms and axe. In a moment the rope tightened, rather, however, with a strong increasing pull than with a sharp jerk. I felt myself moving downwards, but in my old position, erect, my face to the slope and my axe-head buried as deeply as ever in the snow, and dragging heavily like an anchor through its hard surface. Two or three seconds more and I felt the impulse less, my power of tension increasing. In another moment I had stopped alto-

gether. My companion's fall, checked at the first by my resistance, and still more afterwards by his own exertions with his axe, of which he had with the impulse of an old climber retained his hold, had come to an end, and the moment the downward strain was taken off I stopped also.

I have no mental sensations to record during the time of the slide. The mind has, or seems to have, at times an extraordinary power while the body is flying down a snow-slope of, as it were, anticipating its separation from its old companion, and standing apart to watch its fate, in what a writer in 'Fraser' has happily called 'colourless expectation.' The phrase may suggest of itself an explanation of this curious indifference. In such situations the brain is called upon to register so many sensations at the same moment that as in a well-spun top the various hues are mingled into one, and the pale complexion of terror has not time to predominate. But in order to experience this frame of mind the slip must be irremediable by any present exertion; our moments of descent had their practical impulses, and these were quite sufficient to occupy them.

We now found ourselves respectively some sixty and twenty-five feet lower than we had been before, and with our positions reversed, but otherwise none the worse for our accident. So at least I thought for the first moment; but a red patch on the snow immediately drew my attention, and I found that my knuckles, skinned by the friction against the frozen surface, were bleeding freely. My friend, who had fallen further, had suffered more, and the backs of his hands were indeed in a pitiable condition.

Such a temporary inconvenience was not likely, however, to render us melancholy. Confident that no worse thing could happen to us, and that despite foul play we had proved our ability to cope with the Cima di Vezzana, we looked for the best means of gaining the crest and a convenient halting-place. An upright cornicched wall, representing the thickness of the snow-field lying across the top of the pass, barred the head of the gully. With the rocks on our left we naturally declined to have any further dealings; those on the right did not look much more inviting. But, though loose and very steep, they proved with care to be quite manageable; and ten minutes' careful climbing brought us in safety to a spur of rock some fifty feet above the lowest gap.

The way to our maiden peak was still blind. It presented to us a massive shoulder of crag and snow-beds, masking the real summit which lay somewhere out of sight. We bore well to the right along the Gares side of the mountain, and over the shoulder, until we found a gully which took us back towards the crest. A short scramble placed us on it, and by a few steps more along a shattered ridge the summit was conquered.

Our perch was a narrow one, and when our future champion, the indispensable stoneman, had taken his place between us, there would have been little room for a fourth. Still we soon made ourselves comfortable enough to enjoy to the utmost the glory spread out around us. The Cimon della Pala, a great unstable wedge of a mountain, shot up opposite us, its highest rocks overtopping ours by little more than the height of Mr. Whitwell's cairn. The white houses of Primiero showed over the huge shoulder of the Pala.

The lake of Alleghe lay peacefully in its hollow. Beyond, it rose the central dolomites, the Pelmo, the Civetta, and the Tofana, looming largely through the glistening air, like Preadamite monsters couched on the green hills and sunning themselves in the noontide blaze. On one side we looked down on the white stony desolation of the great wilderness which fills the hoof of the shoe, on one of the nails of which we stood, on the other on the forest of Paneveggio and a green stretch of lake-let studded pastures. Far away to the west spread the rolling hill-waves of the Trentino, a vast expanse of broken country stretching out towards the Brenta and the Ortler.

In this region the common rule is reversed. While the troughs of the streams are narrow and rugged, the summits are wooded downs covered with villages. Seen from any moderate eminence, such as the Caressa Pass, the hill-tops compose instead of confining the landscape, they spread out their broad backs to the sunshine in place of cutting it off. Instead of striking against one opposite range the eye sweeps across twenty surging ridges, and wanders in and out of a hundred hollows, distinct or veiled, according as the sunlight falls on them, until it meets on the horizon the snows of the distant range extending from the Adamello to the Weisskugel.

So far as I know, no great painter has chosen a subject from the basin of the Adige. Yet here, even more than in Titian's country and the Val di Mel, all the breadth and romance of Italian landscape is united to Alpine grandeur and nobleness of form.

The full blaze of an unclouded heaven was just tempered into the most delicious warmth by a gentle breath

of air. We could have lingered for many happy hours, and the moment for parting came but too soon.

The return to the gap was only a matter of minutes. There we left our old tracks, and, turning in the opposite direction, slid quickly down snow-slopes filling a recess between the wildest cliffs. The brow on which we halted to tie up the rope was green with grass and gay with the brightest flowers, a tiny garden in the desert, where the seeds wind-borne from far-off pastures are caught by the earth and nursed into being by the kindly rays of the sun streaming full on the southward-facing slope.

We were now immediately above the ravine descending from the Cornelle Pass. Once in this glen we were on old ground, and might easily have descended to Gares.[1] Anxious, however, to regain Paneveggio before dark, we turned our faces to a steep ascent. The way across the level ground on the crest of the ridge had been newly marked out by stonemen. We rested for a few minutes to gaze again over the broad field of the blue and green Trentino, and then plunged beneath the breeze and into an atmosphere of sunbeams. The rays came down on our heads, reflected themselves from the white cliffs, and fastened on us with a steady persecution, from which there was no great rock to flee unto. I need not enter into any details as to our exact route, which was so contrived as to cut into the carriage-road between Paneveggio and San Martino as nearly as possible at its summit-level. If anybody ever chances to aim at the same end he cannot do better than bear to

[1] An inn will probably be established before long at Gares. The ascent of the Cima di Vezzana from that side is a fine expedition, free from the slightest difficulty.

the châlets which he will see below him on the right, and there hire a cow-boy to guide him through the ups and downs of the forests and across the great stony scars which mar the mountain side. Anyhow he must make up his mind to reascend the final zigzags to the Costonzella Pass.

After the pathless thirsty hillside and the burning heat, our walk in the luminous deep-hued evening shadows down a smooth road, varied by a milk-giving châlet or a mossy short cut, was most enjoyable.

As the air grew chill and the golden radiance of the sunbeams died out of it the mountain forms exchanged their flaming splendours for a cool grey-blue tint. In some strange way this bloom in the air seemed to thicken until it became no longer transparent. A thin shadowy film grew into being, and the huge spectral dolomites faded away into it like genii of the 'Arabian Nights.'

Their battle was over; they had done their worst; and the Pala and Vezzana, knowing themselves vanquished, might well be imagined, like respectable Afreets, to have retired into the bottles with which their conquerors had, after the custom of climbers, provided them. But the Alpine Club has no seal of Solomon with which to bind its captives. The Primiero giants have doubtless by this time come forth again, and are ready for fresh encounters with human foes.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PELMO AND VAL DI ZOLDO.

Lacs de moire, coteaux bleus,
Ciel où le nuage passe,
Large espace,
Monts aux rochers anguleux.—THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

THE VENETIAN TYROL—VAL DI ZOLDO—PASSO D'ALLEGHE—SAN NICOLÒ—CAMPO DI METOMETO—ON THE PELMO—A LADY'S ASCENT—THE PEOPLE OF VAL DI ZOLDO.

EVEN in the Venetian Tyrol the tendency of tourists to choose the colder pine-clad north in place of the more tender and varied grace of the south has become observable. Cortina, Caprile, and the Val Fassa are even now on the, in everything but prices, downward path of corruption. But away to the south and outside the 'regular round' there are still many quiet nooks known as yet only to those who

——— Love to enter pleasure by a postern,
Not the broad populous gate which gulps the mob.

It is across the Italian frontier, and not amongst the stern peaks and solemn pines of Cortina, or in the savage gorge of Landro, that we find the nature which Titian so often sketched and painted. In the foregrounds of the northern dolomite country there is a commonplace stiffness and want of variety, which even

the weird crags of the Drei Zinnen or Coll' Agnello cannot render romantic; it lacks the noble spaciousness, the soft and changeful beauties, of the southern region. Its character is German in the place of Italian, it reminds us rather of Dürer than of Titian. It excites and interests the appetite for the wonderful rather than soothes and satisfies our longing for complete and harmonious beauty.

Landscapes composed of blue surging waves of mountains, broken by sharp fins and tusks of rock, of deep skies peopled with luminous masses of white cloud, are familiar to the eyes of thousands who have never seen Italy nor heard of a dolomite. Side by side with the wide sunny spaces, the soft hills and unclouded heaven of the early schools of Perugia and Tuscany, they remain to us as types of what Italian art found most beautiful and sympathetic in nature. The hill-villages of Val di Zoldo claim our interest as the frequent haunts of Titian. While wandering between them, we are amongst the influences which impressed his boyhood and were afterwards the sources of his inspiration. The Pelmo may on good ground assert itself as Titian's own mountain. Mr. Gilbert, in his 'Cadore,' has shown it to us as it stands over against the painter's native town; and it is impossible to turn over the facsimiles of the master's drawings contained in that charming volume without being persuaded that he drew the mountain from life more than once, and his recollection of it very frequently.

Val di Zoldo resembles many of the Venetian valleys in being shaped like a long-necked bottle. In its lower portion a narrow gorge hemmed in by beetling crags, it expands at its head into what, seen from any vantage-

ground, shows as a broad sunny basin, divided by green ridges into a labyrinth of fertile glens. The outlines of these ridges are symmetrical in themselves, and they are grouped together in a constantly shifting but harmonious complexity. Away to the south the horizon is fringed by splintered edges of dolomite, black as the receding night when cut clear against the first orange of dawn, or pale gold in the palpable haze of an Italian noon, or crimson with the reflected rays of sunset. As the paths cross the crests from glen to glen, the snowy boss of the Antelao or the painted cliffs of the Sorapis tower loftily over the low intervening ridge which divides Zoppé from the Val d'Ampezzo. But (to accept the hypothesis of Von Richthofen) the great glory of Val di Zoldo lies in the chance which led the coral insects to select the broad downs lying behind the hamlets of Pecol and Brusadaz for pedestals on which to plant their two noblest efforts, the huge wall of the Civetta and the tower of the Pelmo. Elsewhere in the dolomite country edifices may be seen covering a wider space of ground, or decorated with more fantastic pinnacles, the Westminster Palaces and Milan Cathedrals of their order. But these two works belong to the best style or period of insect art; their builders have shown that simplicity of intention and subordination of detail to a central controlling purpose which mark the highest of the comparatively puny efforts of their human competitors.

To travellers the Civetta is best known by its north-western face, to which the little lake of Alleghe lends a picturesque charm sure to catch the fancy of every passer-by. The structure of the mountain as seen from Val di Zoldo appears less intricate; and if the cliffs are

not so perpendicular, the prevailing angle from base to cope is steeper. Its crags, glittering with rain or sprinkled with recent snow, shine out at an incredible height athwart the slant rays of a setting sun; in the cloudless morning hours they become ordinary rocks up which the experienced cragsman detects a path, safe enough when the spring is over and the upper ledges have 'voided their rheum.'

To the mind of the climber who wanders beneath its cliffs I know not what incongruous fancies the Pelmo may not suggest. From Val Fiorentina and Santa Lucia its broad shoulders and massive head resemble an Egyptian sphynx; as we move southwards one of the shoulders becomes detached, and the mountain is transformed into a colossal antediluvian cub crouching beside its parent. When clouds part to show the vast glittering crest which overlooks Val di Zoldo we seem to realise 'the great and high wall' of the city coming down from heaven of Apocalyptic vision. If we ever have a 'Practical Tyrol,' the likeness of the solid mass seen from the Ampezzo road to the Round Tower of Windsor will probably be remarked on,—and there will be a certain amount of vulgar truth in the observation.

One of the easiest paths to Val di Zoldo starts from Alleghe, and has been described by Messrs. Gilbert and Churchill. From Caprile, the more usual point of departure, there is a direct track which first attacks the mountain with the headstrong energy of a novice, and then takes a long breathing-space along the level. After passing several bunches of farm-houses, clinging to the steep sides of Monte Fernazza like flies to a window-pane, it again climbs up through woods to the

hamlet of Col.[1] The needful height is then won, and a green terrace, overhanging Alleghe and looking into the heart of the Civetta, leads to the great rolling down which spreads out towards the Pelmo.

Heavy clouds, charged with electricity and rain, had swept about from peak to peak during our walk from Caprile, and the greyness of evening was deepened by heavy showers as we splashed down the wet path from Pecol. Near the river, and nestling under a steep bank crowned by a far-seen church and spire, we came upon the inn of San Nicolò. It stands a little back from the path behind a courtyard, a tall three-storied house, hanging out no vulgar sign of entertainment for man and beast. At the top of the three stories are two bedrooms, clean and spotless, hung with engravings, and furnished with the air of conscious wealth of a farmhouse best-parlour. Their windows give an exquisite glimpse down the deep glen which falls towards Forno di Zoldo, and across to a high ridge capped by a most fantastic fence of dolomite splinters. But if the upstairs rooms are bright and comfortable, they have not the homely charm of the great ground-floor kitchen. It is a wide room, ranged round with rows of lustrous brass pans, alternating with generous, full-bodied, wide-mouthed jugs, which could never give a drop less than the measure painted across them. At one end is the fireplace, of the sort common in southern Tyrol, a deep semicircular bow forming a projection in the outer wall of the house; the floor is slightly raised, and a bench runs round it, leaving the centre to be used for the hearth,—an arrangement which seems to solve the problem of the greatest happiness of the greatest

[1] Not the hamlet of the same name subsequently mentioned.

number better even than our old English chimney-corners.

The structure which supports—not the fire, for that lies on the hearthstone, but the pots and pans which may be cooking upon it—is a piece of smith's work, enriched with wrought-out conventional folinge, chains and two noble brass griffins. All the character of the workman has been stamped into the metal, and comes out even in the irregularities of detail which Birmingham might call defects,—a modern and native product, however, as our host with pardonable pride assured us, and the best that the neighbouring forges of Forno di Zoldo can send out.

The master of the house proved to be a man of wealth and position in his native valley. He knew Venice well, and something of the more distant world. 'What can one do?' he said, in answer to our compliments on his house; 'in the mountains there are no cafés, no theatres; one must build a fine house, and get what novelty one can from strangers; but,' he added with a sigh, 'there are not so many.'

In the gloom of a wet evening the conquest of the Pelmo on the morrow seemed little more than a slender hope. Still, in the Alps successes are chiefly won by being always prepared for the best, and we were resolved not to lose a chance. In the matter of guides, however, we found a difficulty. We were ourselves, owing to the causes mentioned in the last chapter, but poorly provided. The Vezzana had not proved beyond our unaided powers. But we had no ambition to dispense with native assistance any further, or to go up the Pelmo by any but the easiest route. The native of Caprile who had carried our wraps over the Passo d'Alleghe was a

pleasant fellow, but he had never been on the Pelmo, where, if anywhere, local knowledge is indispensable. It was with some dismay, therefore, that we first learnt that no hunter who knew the mountain could be found nearer than Brusadaz, a hamlet an hour off. However, Brusadaz turned out to be on the way to the Pelmo, and in the early morning we could reckon on finding the inhabitants at home.

As at five A.M. we took the path which wound round the hill rising above the church of San Nicolò, the saw-blade of Monte Piacedel cut a clear sky to the southwards. Brusadaz was soon discovered lying in the centre of a natural theatre, which opens into the main valley very near its fork at Forno di Zoldo, and is directly overlooked on the north by the Pelmo, a square block of smooth, solid and apparently inaccessible precipice. The hunter Agosto di Marco, to whom we bore an introduction, was quickly forthcoming, and, with unusual but welcome readiness, in five minutes prepared to lead us to the mountain. Our luck seemed altogether good, for the stonemen on the Pelmo were clear of mist, and we promised ourselves a day of more than usual enjoyment.

A steep grassy bank severs the quiet hollow of Brusadaz from the Zoppé branch of the valley. We reached the crest at some distance from the base of the Pelmo, and had to follow an up-and-down track in order to gain the lower end of the Campo di Rutorto, a broad level pasturage, lying at the eastern foot of the mountain. The cliffs, up which a way was to be made, were now before us; but we found, to our surprise, that their appearance—partially veiled, it is true, by floating

mists—was almost as discouraging as that of the southern face.

There is scarcely any summit in the Alps which from every point of view presents so formidable an appearance as the Pelmo. Time and the various forces of nature, almost invariably create a breach in the defences of great mountains. Here, however, their work has been left unfinished. The upper cliffs are, it is true, broken on the east by a long slope, where, after a fresh fall, snow lies in such quantities as to show that it is easy of ascent. But this snow, when, as in spring, it has accumulated to a sufficient mass, falls from the bottom of the slope over a perpendicular cliff of at least 1,000 feet in height. It is only at what may be called the northern cape of the bay formed by the whole S.E. or Zoppé face of the mountain, that the ridge dividing the Campo di Rutorto from Val Ruton runs up, buttress-like, against the cliffs to a point not perhaps more than 400 or 500 feet lower than the bottom of the upper breach, but fully half a mile distant from it; and the cliffs along this half-mile are quite hopeless in appearance.

It was consequently with some surprise that we found ourselves climbing the buttress in question, and, as far as we could see, about to run our heads against the wall-like rocks on which it rested. Before setting foot on the crags the rope was uncoiled and brought into use. We at once found sufficient employment for our muscles in making long steps, or rather lifts of the body, from ledge to ledge of a rock-face, the angle of which (disregarding our footholds) appeared to approximate very closely on 90. The transverse shelves, however, afforded

excellent support, and made our progress a matter of perfect security.

Above the first 150 feet a narrow gully disclosed itself, which led us to higher and more broken rocks. Then, again, the wall looked perfectly smooth, upright, and unassailable. On the last place where it could have found room to rest was a low pile of stones. Standing beside it, we began for the first time to comprehend the key to our dilemma; we were now to turn altogether to the left, and to attempt the formidable task of traversing the face of the Pelmo. Our pathway was before us, a horizontal ledge or groove, at present a few feet broad, shortly narrowing so as to afford only sufficient standing-ground, threatening before long not to do even this. The cliffs around us bent into deep recesses, and each time a projecting angle was reached, the side of the bay seen opposite appeared wholly smooth and impassable.

This portion of the ascent of the Pelmo is, in my limited experience, one of the most impressive, and at the same time enjoyable, positions in which a climber can find himself. Even a sluggish imagination has here enough to stimulate it. The mysterious pathway, unseen from a short distance, seems to open for the mountaineer's passage, and to close up again behind him as he advances. The stones he dislodges, after two or three long bounds, disappear with a whirr into a sheer depth of seething mist, of which the final far-off crash reveals the immensity. The overhanging rocks above, the absence of any resting-place even for the eye below, do not allow him for a moment to forget that the crags to which he clings form part of one of the wildest precipices in Europe.

D. W. F. del.

ON THE PRIMO.

To walk for a mile or so along a ledge no broader than the sill which runs underneath the top story windows of a London square, with, for twice the height of St. Paul's cross above the pavement, no shelf below wide enough to arrest your fall, must sound an alarming feat to anyone, except perhaps a professional burglar. And yet to a head naturally free from giddiness, and to nerves moderately hardened by mountain experiences, the full sense of the majesty of the situation need not be disturbed by physical fear. The animal 'homo scandens' is not in the slightest danger. His pedestal may be scanty, but it is sufficient. He can follow his chamois-hunter amongst the abysses with as much confidence as Dante followed the elder poet amidst the boiling gulfs of Tartarus.

As we went on, the height of the groove, and consequently the head-room, became, for a time, inadequate to our requirements—a fact which a moment's inattention seldom failed to impress forcibly on the brain. Let the reader picture himself walking along the mantelpiece and the cornice coming down on him so as to force him to stoop or lie flat. 'Va bene!' cheerily remarked the Brusadaz hunter, in reply to some grumbles on this score, 'it is all as easy as this, except one place, and that is of no consequence.' This place, the 'eccentric obstacle' of the guidebook, arrived in due course, a projecting corner where the ledge was not broken away but partially closed in by a roof of rock. There was just room enough to allow a thin person to lie down and worm himself round with due care and deliberation; a brilliant climber could find some support for portions of his body on slight knobs below; those who were neither thin nor brilliant had to trust to the rope

and their companions. For us, who followed an adroit and confident leader, there was little difficulty in the feat; but the happy boldness of our predecessor, who, when his companion's courage failed him, himself led the way, did not the less impress us. Mr. Ball, we agreed, had here proved himself in the body as well as in the spirit the true 'Alpine Guide.'

Having all wound or scrambled past the corner as instinct led us, we followed round yet another bay the faithful ledge. At last the precipice above us broke back, and our guide announced that all difficulty was at an end. And so it proved, at least as far as nerves and gymnastics were concerned. But to keep up the pace he now set us was no slight task. We raced upwards through the mists at true chamois-hunter speed, over steep slopes, now of large broken crags, now of smaller and less cohesive fragments, up low cliffs, then over more slopes, until we began to think the mountain interminable. At last, where a stream, the hidden roar of which was often heard, flashed for a moment into light, I was glad to call a halt. Two buttresses of rock, the ends of the topmost ridge of the Pelmo, loomed largely, and, despite our exertions, still loftily overhead; a glimmer of ice shone between them.

We soon came to the glacier, a sheet of uncrevassed ice, sloping slightly from south to north, and filling the large but from below unseen and unsuspected hollow which lies between the horseshoe-shaped battlements of the mountain. 'If the water of the ocean,' writes Professor Huxley, 'could be suddenly drained away we should see the atolls rising from the sea-bed like vast truncated cones, and resembling so many volcanic craters, except that their sides would be steeper than

those of an ordinary volcano.' The description exactly fits our peak; and if, reversing the picture, we imagine the level of the Adriatic raised a trifle of 10,000 feet, the glacier would yield its place to a lagoon, and these ridges would exactly represent an atoll of the southern ocean. Our leader at first swerved to the left towards the lower crags which immediately overlooked his native village; turned by our remonstrances, he led us to the highest rocks, a broken crest perfectly easy of access.[1] The verge of the huge outer cliffs, in some places level up to the extreme edge, and unencumbered with loose stones so as to allow of the closest approach, was gained within a few yards of the cairn which marks the summit.

Through a framework of mists we could see down from time to time into Val Fiorentina and along the gorge of Sottoguda, but the upper mass of the Marmolata and all the neighbouring peaks were wrapped in dense folds of leaden-coloured cloud. Feeling that a distant view was hopeless, we hastened to retrace our steps before any wandering storm should burst on the mountain. During the descent the fog became at times thick enough to suggest unpleasant fears of missing the direction. No such calamity, however, occurred; and, gaining a slide on every slope composed of fragments minute enough to allow it, we found ourselves far sooner than we had expected on the brink of the lower precipice. The spot was marked by a patch of dwarf Edelweiss, which, in company with other bright but

[1] The assurance given by the San Vito landlord to Messrs. Gilbert and Churchill, that 'only the final ice-portion was difficult' (*The Dolomite Mountains*, p. 399), was, I need scarcely say, wholly misleading and contrary to fact.

tiny flowering plants, grew here and there upon the mountain. We made our way rapidly back along the ledge; the confidence of experience more than compensating for the inconvenience of the cliff, to which we had often to hold, being now on the left instead of the right hand. Where the direct descent on to the green buttress had to be made we, by keeping a few yards too much to the left, nearly got into a scrape, which was only avoided by a timely acknowledgment of the error. Strait and narrow as is the right path on the Pelmo, all other ways lead to destruction far too palpably not to induce one immediately to return to it.

On the top of the buttress we rejoined our provision-sack, and enjoyed a long halt in full view of the Antelao, now towering above the clouds, a gigantic vapour-wreathed pyramid. From this point it is, as we found the next day, but a two hours' walk or ride amongst bilberry-bushes and forests to San Vito on the Ampezzo road. To return to San Nicolò was, however, our present object, and our hunter promised a new and easy path. We rushed rapidly down a very steep funnel to the great patch of avalanche-snow which lies against the base of the cliffs in the centre of the Campo di Rutorto. In the sort of cave left between the crag and snow a jet of water, spouting like a fountain of Moses from the arid rocks, served to fill our cups. A little footpath mounts gently the rhododendron-covered slope beyond, and winds as near as it can creep to the huge mountain. The cliffs above are broken, and in this part there was formerly a possibility of scrambling through them. Our guide declared that owing to a fall of rock the passage had now become extremely difficult; and his statement gains some confirmation from the

fact that two of my friends who attempted (with a San Vito man) an escalade from this direction, were forced to retreat, one of them with a broken head. While climbing in advance he dislodged with one hand a boulder from a shelf above him, which made its first bound on his skull, fortunately without loosening the firm grasp of his other arm or inflicting any permanent injury. Unstable boulders are the great source of danger in this part of the Alps, and even old climbers require to be constantly reminded that on dolomite rocks they must test before they trust every hand-hold.

At the south-eastern angle of the Pelmo the cliff rises sheer for some distance and then a wedge of stone suddenly juts out, overhanging its base to an extent which I fear to estimate in figures, and can only describe as incredible. The under part has fallen and lies on the path, but a huge block still hangs threateningly overhead, an appropriate gargoyle for so Titanic an edifice.

The brow beneath it commanded a wide and splendid prospect. To the north rose the red crags of the Sorapis and the more symmetrical outlines of the Antelao. Turning eastwards, green pasturages and gable-formed ridges filled the foreground. The blunt-headed crags of the Sasso di Bosco Nero occupied the middle distance. Beyond the gorge of the Piave we looked across to the least-known portion of the dolomites, the blue mountains, crested with dark teeth and horns, which encompass remote Cimolais.

A sturdy little goatherd, the first human being we had seen since leaving Brusadaz, here came up to greet us. The boy did not depend on his voice alone to summon his flock. Round his shoulders was slung a

trumpet, one blast from which sent flying a peal of wild echoes not to be disregarded even by the deafest and most obstinate of goats.

The terrace path continued to skirt the base of the Pelmo, until it reached a platform of pasturage, the Campo sô Pelmo, lying due south of the mountain. From this pasturage a second way may be found to the upper slopes of the Pelmo. It is curious that this line of attack should have been adopted by the Cortina guides in preference to that by the angle of the mountain facing San Vito, so far the nearest and most natural route from Val d'Ampezzo.

The difference in difficulty is probably in favour of the southern ascent, but it can scarcely be sufficient to account for good rock-climbers making a circuit of several miles. Yet Santo Siorpaes in 1872 led Mr. Tuckett round the mountain.

The only English ascent by the southern route was made by Mr. and Mrs. Packe in 1870. They camped out for the night at the southern foot of the mountain. I am glad to be able to quote Mr. Packe's description of the climb, both because his impressions confirm my own, and for the sake of any ladies who may be thereby encouraged to venture on the Pelmo.

"From our camp a gentle ascent of twenty minutes over undulating ground brought us to a grassy mamelon, forming an outlying buttress of the mountain. Here we left the heavier portion of our provisions, and at once commenced to climb north-east up a very steep rocky gully which separates the detached shoulder described by Mr. Freshfield as "the antediluvian cub crouching beside its parent." In this part of the ascent, partly over snow, partly over rocks, though the rope was

sometimes brought into use, there was nothing very formidable. When at the foot of the ridge which unites the cub to its parent, we turned to the right, traversing transversely a steep talus of schist, with a precipice below, but at some mètres' distance. After passing this we reached a corner, where the rock came down vertically from above, falling in the same way below; and here the difficulty commenced. For about an hour we were passing along a ledge, which wound round the recesses of the mountain, in one place entirely riven away by a rent in the face of the rock, across which we had to step, while the stones we dislodged fell with a sheer descent to a depth which the eye dared not fathom, but which might have been some six hundred mètres beneath our feet.

'It is this system of ledges on the face of a perpendicular cliff, which, moreover, is crumbling in its nature, that forms the difficulty of the Pelmo; and these cannot be escaped, though they may be varied, approach it from whatever side you will: but, that ours was not the same ledge as that by which Mr. Freshfield mounted is, I think, at once evident from the reasons I have alleged, that our left hand was always to the mountain in ascending, and that there was no place where we were compelled to crawl.

'On emerging from this ledge the precipice on our left hand broke back, and I take it here we had reached the same spot as that attained by Mr. Freshfield from the opposite side. At any rate, from this spot, his description would exactly apply to our route till we reached the summit, which was still about a thousand mètres above us. All serious difficulty was at an end. Our course lay over steep rocks, laced with streams

descending from the glacier,[1] and the only vegetation which attracted my notice was here and there the bright yellow flowers of the Alpine poppy. Above these rocks comes the glacier basin, which we crossed, like Mr. Freshfield avoiding the lower ridges on the left, and keeping to the right close to the highest crags of the Pelmo, which we at last reached after a rough and laborious escalade.

'We remained on the summit from 11.30 to 1 P.M., and then returned by exactly the same route, traversing the same ledge, but this time, of course, with our right shoulders to the rock. After a halt at our camp of the preceding night, we made the best of our way down to San Vito, which we reached at 7, and drove thence in our carriage to Cortina the same evening. The mountain of course may be done quicker, but I give the times, if any other lady should like to try the ascent.'[2]

After crossing a gentle elevation, we found ourselves on the verge of the hollow of Brusadaz, and turned along a sledge-track leading down the crest between it and the western branch of Val di Zoldo, beyond which the crest of the Civetta stood forth high above the belts of vapour. The hamlet of Coi, seated as it were astride the narrow ridge, looks down at once on Brusadaz and San Nicolò; a steep corkscrew path led us in twenty minutes to the latter village, where we found our return not even begun to be expected.[2]

The Pelmo and Civetta naturally engross the attention of the traveller on his first visit to Val di Zoldo;

[1] Mr. Bryce tells me that among the upper rocks of the Pelmo, above the ice and somewhat E. of the highest point he found a strong iron spring.

[2] We had been absent 10½ hours. The ascent occupied five hours of quick walking: the return, made on the whole much more leisurely, about four; halts accounted for the remaining hour and a half.

but the splendid walls of dolomite which fence in the valley on the south-east and south-west invite a second visit and further exploration. Passes may be found through the western range to Agordo; through the eastern, presided over by the strange block of the Sasso di Bosco Nero, the 'unknown mountains' of Miss Edwards, to the valley of the Piave. They have been already traversed by Mr. M. Holzmann, one of the most indefatigable explorers of this region.[1]

I cannot bring myself to conclude this imperfect notice without paying a tribute to the Italians of the southern dolomites, rendered, as it seems to me, the more due and necessary by the frequent praise which the Boeotian simplicity of their German-speaking neighbours has received from English writers. A mountaineer may well have a good word for the population of Val di Zoldo. Where else in the Alps will he find a valley the natives of which, alone and unincited by foreign gold, have found their way to the tops of the highest peaks? And let it not be thought that this success was an easy one. The Civetta, from whatever side it is seen, is of formidable steepness, and, as I have said before, the Pelmo is to the eye of a mountaineer one of the most perplexing peaks in the Alps. Yet the men of Val di Zoldo, by following their game day after day, and learning that the ledge which offered the chamois a means of escape was also for the hunter a means of pursuit, found out at last the secret of the circuitous access to the upper rocks, which had been for centuries a true 'Gemsen-Freiheit.'

I do not doubt that Mr. Ball was the first man to stand on the highest crest of the Pelmo. Its attain-

[1] See Appendix A.

ment was probably not an object of sufficient value to the hunters to induce them to cross the upper glacier and brave the peril of being swallowed up alive by some hidden chasm, a risk which weighs heavily on the mind of the peasant who has yet to learn the saving grace of a rope. But the real difficulty lies below, and amateur climbers with foreign guides might have sought long and vainly for the passage which the spirit of the neighbouring villagers had found ready for them.

But it is not alone on the narrow ground of venturesomeness that the people of Val di Zoldo recommend themselves to an English traveller. They possess in a high degree the intelligence and quick courtesy we are accustomed to meet with in Northern Italy. No peasant will pass the stranger as he sits to rest or sketch beside the path without a few bright words of greeting and enquiry, showing often a feeling for natural beauty and a quickness of apprehension rare amongst a secluded population. The slowness alike of mind and of action, the refusal to grasp anything outside their own daily experiences, so common among the peasantry of the Pusterthal, is here unknown. To quote a shrewd observer, 'the men are such gentlemen and the women such ladies, that every chance meeting becomes an interchange of courtesies;' and the traveller, turning northwards, will often have occasion to join in Dickens's regret for what he has left behind, 'the beautiful Italian manners, the sweet language, the quick recognition of a pleasant look or cheerful word, the captivating expression of a desire to oblige in everything.'

CHAPTER XIV.

MEN AND MOUNTAINS.

What, I pray you, is more pleasant, more delectable and more acceptable unto a man than to behold the height of hills as if they were the very Atlantes themselves of heaven?

Art thou in nature, and yet hast not known nature?

HERMANN KIRCHNER, circa A.D. 1660.

MEN AND MOUNTAINS—MOUNTAIN-HATERS—A LITERARY EXAMPLE—POETS AND PAINTERS—THE PLACE OF ART—ALPINE SCENERY AND ART—THE BEAUTY OF THE ALPS—THE SNOW WORLD—MONS. LOTTE'S PICTURES—CONCLUSION.

SWITZERLAND, from a distance practically beyond that of the Caucasus at the present day, has in the last thirty years been brought within a few hours of our homes. Increased facilities of travel and of residence in Alpine regions, acting in unison with many less obvious but equally real influences, have extended human sympathy to Nature in her wildest forms and created a new sentiment, the Love of the Alps.

The indifference of men to mountains in past ages has perhaps been exaggerated. The prevalence throughout the world of mountain-worship in different forms seems to show that the great peaks and the eternal snows have before now had power to stir men's minds and to mix with their lives. But the image which has been adored as a god is for a time cast aside, and it is only to distant generations that it becomes valuable for

its intrinsic beauty of design and workmanship. In the case of the great ranges the period of neglect had been a long one. In the Europe of the Middle Ages all hilly regions became surrounded by associations of fear and danger. The plan of the universe was indeed held to have been originally divine; but the devil had somehow become clerk of the works, and managed to put in a good deal not in the original specification. Earthquakes, tempests, venomous reptiles and mountains were all accepted as productions of the evil principle.

From this disfavour the mountains have been during the last century slowly emerging. Better acquaintance has led to the discovery of all the beauties and benefits the Alps offer to those who seek them in a proper mood. We have learnt thoroughly to appreciate the variety imparted to all nature by the accidents of hill scenery, to know and love the thousand forms of peaks, the changing charm of lakes and forests, the rush of the grey Swiss torrent under the upright pines, and the blue repose of the Italian stream under the beech shadows. Moreover, Alpine climbing has revealed the wonders of the kingdom of frost and snow. The imprisoned colours of glacier ice, the ruin of its fantastic towers and tottering minarets, the splendour of its fretted and icicle-hung caves are no longer familiar only to Arctic travellers. The overpowering height of some peak soaring majestically heavenwards can never have been felt as it is by those who understand through experience the dimensions and meaning of each rock and patch of snow on its ridges.

The flow of human sympathy towards the mountains has, however, been too recent not to have left many traces of the deep ebb of antipathy which had preceded it. 'Survivals' of the old and narrower tone of thought

of a hundred years ago are constantly to be met with in English society. They even penetrate occasionally to the tables-d'hôte of Swiss inns, where they may be recognised by the air of calm superiority generally assumed by the unappreciative, whether in the presence of music, a picture, or a peak.

These representatives of mediæval sentiment are often mediævalists also in their practice. Where their opinions are based on anything besides hereditary prejudice it is very often found if you examine them tenderly that their experience has been coloured, or more correctly speaking obscured, by bodily torture. They have climbed with unboiled peas in their shoes, and without the excuse of their forefathers. For they have deadened their natural senses by bodily discomfort without any hope of prospective gain for their souls. They have literally repeated the old penance by setting out to walk with new boots and cotton socks and a ponderous knapsack. They have rushed over passes and up peaks in bad weather; or overtaxed their powers in a first tour: or they have perhaps never persevered long enough to be able to tread with ease a mountain-path, where the novice dares not lift his eyes from the ground, while his companion, some days or weeks more experienced, can enjoy at once the scenery and motion. No wonder that what is a delight to the wise is to them foolishness, and that they speedily renounce the mountains.

Such mountain-haters still find champions both in English and foreign modern literature. I shall not be tempted to take the late Canon Kingsley as an example, for his amusing attack on mountains[1] is in truth only a plea for flats, and in that light I heartily sympathise

[1] Prose Idylls.

with it. Moreover Mr. Kingsley loved all nature so well that his cursing is of the most superficial and Balaamitic character, and the argument he puts in the mouth of his 'peevish friend' would invite mercy by its very feebleness.

A distinguished French critic will furnish us with a far more genuine example of the old school. M. Taine, travelling in the Pyrenees to write a book, experiences a difficulty the reverse of Mr. Kingsley's. Feeling that he ought, as a man of his time, to bless, he yet cannot refrain from cursing altogether. The antique modes of expression flow naturally from his pen; he is constantly reminding us of the once favourite theological view that the mountains are a disease of nature. His language at times resembles that of a medical student fresh from the hospitals and the dissecting-room. He sums up his impressions of the Pyrenees in the reflection that they are 'monstrous protuberances.' Here is a picture from Luchon! 'The slopes hung one over the other notched, dislocated, bleeding; the sharp ridges and fractures are yellow with miserable mosses, vegetable ulcers which defile the nakedness of the rocks with their leprous spots.'[1] This loathsome simile for mountain mosses pleases M. Taine so much that he never mentions them without repeating it. Take now a more general sketch.

'How grotesque are these jagged heads, these bodies bruised and heaped together, these distorted shoulders! What unknown monsters, what a deformed and gloomy race, outside humanity! Par quel horrible accouchement la terre les a-t-elle soulevés hors de ses entrailles?' It would be easy to fill a page or two with such 'elegant extracts.'

[1] Contrast this comparison with Mr. Browning's, quoted p. 28.

Mountaineers may sometimes feel disposed to resent such unworthy treatment of mountain beauty. But the true lover of the Alps is not necessarily disposed to be arrogant in his faith or to wish all the world of the same mind. While he knows that to him the mountains are sympathetic, he admits that they have also an unsympathetic side which is the first to present itself to many. He recognises in the hill country a type of nature, free, vigorous and healthy, and is glad that others should share the enjoyment of it. But as the affection of a sailor for the sea does not blunt him to the pleasures of dry land, so his feeling for the Alps does not make him less susceptible to milder scenes. He does not assert that mountains are the most beautiful objects in creation, but only that they are beautiful. He does not claim for them undivided worship, but a share of admiration.

Little disposed however as we may generally be to proselytise, we must feel that there is one class of our fellow-countrymen amongst whom we like to make converts. We too often find blind to mountain beauty those who, as we think, ought to be its priests and interpreters. For the painter, like the poet, can feel 'harmonies of the mountains and the skies' invisible to the general eye; it is his gift by a higher or more developed sense to recognise and reveal to others the beauties of the visible world. By his happy power of fixing on canvas the vision of a moment, he extends the appreciation of nature of all who intelligently look at his work. Paul Potter and Hobbema have taught us the charm which lurks in the flat and at first sight monotonous landscapes of Holland. Looking through their eyes we see the beauty of the moist sun-suffused atmosphere, of the sudden alternations of shadow and

gleam which chequer and gild the abundant verdure and peaceful homesteads. Corot and Daubigny lead us better to appreciate the unfamiliar spirit of French river-sides in the dewy morning hours or the red gloaming, a beauty indistinct in form yet vivid in impression as that of a dream. When we exclaim as we rush past in the steamer or the express, 'What a Cuyp!' or 'How like Corot!' we pay a just tribute to the artist through whose works the essential features of the scene before us have been made so readily recognisable.

In the same way those who have already studied the beautiful Titian (No. 635) in our National Gallery, or the landscape lately exhibited at Burlington House, will find a deeper and subtler pleasure in their first view of the great Belluno valley. But this unfortunately is a rare example. As a rule the Alpine traveller must depend entirely on his own powers of observation and selection, or must sharpen his appreciative faculty by the aid of poets.

For at least the word-painters of our generation have not been false to their mission of expressing and carrying on the best feelings of their age. The works of our living poets abound with sketches of mountain scenery the precision of which may satisfy even a literal-minded enthusiast. In the exquisite Alpine idyll in the 'Princess' we have brought before us one after another the scenes of the Bernese Oberland; Grindelwald with its firths of ice, Lauterbrunnen with its monstrous ledges and 'thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,' or the gentler beauties of the vale of Frutigen and the Lake of Brienz. Beside this finished picture might be placed a gallery of sketches familiar to every reader of contemporary poetry. Mr. Browning

draws with sharp, firm strokes the paths over the foot-hills of Lombardy, where the high arched bridge leaps the blue brook, and at each sudden turn the faded frescoes of a chapel gleam from between the chestnut-trees over whose tops 'the silver spearheads charge.' Mr. Matthew Arnold prefers the more solemn mood of the inner Alps, where above the hillside, 'thin sprinkled with snow,' 'the pines slope, the cloudstrips hang soft in their heads.'

Across the Atlantic, among the other great English-speaking people, the poets have not any more than our own treated mountains as 'outside humanity.' Emerson has dwelt more fully than any of his forerunners on the appeal they make to our intellectual faculty; Joaquin Miller reflects the fascination exerted over the senses by the great Californian ranges.

Art, like poetry, ought surely to be the expression of the strongest and clearest feelings of its day, and thus the interpreter and instructor of weaker or more confused minds. The types of beauty are eternal, but painters are human beings, and a man can successfully paint or describe only what he has seen and felt for himself. The most vivid impressions of each age and individual are necessarily derived from the forms of life around them, and these are therefore the best suited to inspire their art-faculty. The sculptors of the Parthenon did not carve Egyptian dances but Attic festivals; the great Italian masters painted, whether as Virgin, God, or Saint, their own countrymen or women in the scenery of their own homes. In the dulness of our outer lives, the deadness of our souls to natural enjoyments, lies assuredly one of the chief causes of the artistic barrenness of our century. Can we then afford to throw away lightly,

as material for art, any form of nature which seems really capable of stirring our minds into some sort of enthusiasm?

Neglect of to us familiar scenes and contemporary subjects is, however, often excused on the ground that these things were unknown to the painters of the Renaissance. In point of fact this amounts to a protestation of our incapacity or unwillingness to discover beauty where it has not been already pointed out, to a confession that amongst us art is dead. For to be able to choose out, harmonise, and idealise the elements of beauty in the world as it goes on around us is the essential quality of living art. It is one, it is true, which is too often missed on the walls of Burlington House.

Many of the most cultivated living artists show their veneration for the old masters by endeavouring to reproduce the results they arrived at, rather than by studying nature at first-hand and in their spirit. Consequently in one half of modern painting we see, in the place of free and spontaneous accomplishment, an abundance of tentative and over-conscious reprodnction. And unfortunately this half finds its best justification in the character of the other. To put it simply, our school may—of course with some illustrious exceptions—be divided into those who think too much and feel too little, and those who neither think nor feel at all.

Some of our friends are sitting all the day long watching seriously in dim galleries if perchance they may yet catch the mantle fallen from the prophets of old. There are others who, going straight to daily life and nature, are often too idle or dull-eyed to penetrate beneath the surface. In place of selecting and com-

biming for us elements of beauty, they attempt to tickle our senses with vulgar tricks of imitation. For one 'Chill October' we have had twenty river scenes crowded with smart people in boats; for one sketch of Leighton, Walker, or Mason half a hundred showy trivialities.

From both schools, the Retrospective and the Commonplace, any invitation to the Alps will receive the same answer. The mountains, begins one voice, are harsh, violent, and unmanageable in outline, crude and monotonous in colour, and devoid of atmosphere. The great masters of the Renaissance never painted the Alps, continues the other, with, remembering Titian, doubtful accuracy. In short, we are given to understand, as politely as may be, that the hill-country may be good for those dull souls which, incapable naturally of appreciating more delicate or subtle charms, require to be strongly stirred; but that to the artist's eye the Alps are the chromolithography of nature—that, in fact, a taste for mountain scenery is bad taste.

Yet the majesty and poetry of the great ranges are not incapable of representation. One mountain sketch of Turner is enough to prove this. But if such an example is thought too exceptional let us take another. I have before me pictures in brown, twelve inches by ten, showing above the mossy roofs of a Tyrolese homestead and the broad sunny downs of Botzen the tusked and horned ramparts which guard King Laurin's rose-garden; the Ortler, its vast precipices of crowning ice-pyramid half seen through belts of cloud; the soaring curve of the Wetterhorn as it sweeps up like an aspiring thought from the calm level life of the pasturages at its feet; the Matterhorn, an Alpine Prometheus chained down on its icy pedestal, yet chal-

lenging the skies with dauntless front. Is mind powerless where mere reflection can succeed not once but repeatedly? Can it be impossible to put on canvas subjects which readily adapt themselves to modest-sized photographs? So long as form as well as colour is a source of pleasure, the Alps will offer a store of the most valuable material for art.

Nevertheless, a certain amount of truth underlies all the current criticisms on Alpine scenery. In 'the blue unclouded weather' which sometimes, to the joy of mountaineers and sightseers who reckon what they see by quantity rather than quality, extends through a Swiss August, the air is deficient in tone and gradation. In the central Cantons the prevailing colours are two tints of green. The vivid hue of pasturages and broad-leaved trees is belted by the heavier shade of pine-woods, and both are capped by a dazzling snow-crown, producing an effect to a painter's eye crude and unmanageable. The Alps have, in common with most great natures, rough and rugged places, such as are not found in more every-day lives or landscapes. Their outlines are often wanting in grace, and of a character which does not readily fall into a harmonious composition.

But to allow all this is only to show that here as elsewhere there is need for selection before imitation. Those who, ignoring the essential qualities of the mountains, insist only on their blemishes remind me of the foreigner who sees in English landscapes nothing but a monotony of heavy green earth overshadowed by a sunless sky. Their disparagement is like most erroneous criticism, the honest expression of the little knowledge described in the proverb.

Familiarity with what he represents is essential to

the painter's success. Men paint best as a rule the scenery of their own homes. Perugino gives us Umbrian hills and the lake of Thrasimene; Cima and Titian Venetian landscapes and colours; Turner loves most English seas and mists. It is useless, except for a rare genius, to go once to Switzerland and paint one or two pictures, for in the mountains knowledge is especially needed. The first view of the Alps is in most cases a disappointment. Our expectations have been unconsciously based on the great mounds of cumulus cloud which roll up against lowland skies. We expect something comparable to them, and we find only a thin white line which the smallest cloud-belt altogether effaces. First impressions require to be corrected by patient study of detail before any adequate comprehension can be formed of the true scale. The stories of our countryman who proposed to spend a quiet day in strolling along the crest of the chain from the St. Theodule to Monte Rosa, of the New Yorker who thought he saw one of the mules of a party descending the Matterhorn, have become proverbs. I suppose no season passes without the Grands Mulets being mistaken for a company of mountaineers by some new arrivals at Chamonix. And too often Alpine pictures betray a similar confusion of mind in their painters. I have seen the Schreckhorn through utter ignorance of rock-drawing converted into a slender pyramid which might have stood comfortably beside the Mammoth Tree under the roof of the Crystal Palace. Not long ago there was a picture in the Academy of the Lake of Lucerne, where the mountain-tops looked scarcely so high above the water as the frame was above the ground. The hangers had done their best, but nothing could give those mountains height.

Moreover it is well to know something of the substance as well as the size of your subject. Some painters, it is true, have had a conventional mode of expressing all foliage; but their example is not one to be imitated. The different forms and texture of granite and limestone must be carefully attended to. Again, before it is possible properly to paint the golden lights and pearl-grey shadows on the face of the Jungfrau some knowledge must be gained of the meaning of the lines and furrows which seam the upper snows.

A sense for colour is doubtless a born gift. Nevertheless it will take many days of watching before even the keenest apprehension seizes upon all the subtleties of distance and light and shade in the mountains. A dark green pine, a brown châlet, and a white peak may do very well in a German chromolithograph. But the artist and the mountain-lover ask for something better than the clever landscapes of Bierstadt and the Munich school, faithful it may be, but faithful in a dry and narrow manner, and giving us every detail without the spirit of the scene. The forms are there exactly enough, but local colour and sentiment are wanting. We have a catalogue instead of a poem. One of Turner's noble pictures of the gorge of Göschenen is worth a gallery of such compositions.

Those who are seeking to understand mountains will do well not to confine themselves to the round of the tourist. Convenience and health, not love of beauty, have been the chief influences in determining the orbits of our fellow-countrymen. Nothing compels the painter to linger on the bleak uplands round the sources of the Inn, where a shallow uniform trench does duty for

the valley which has never yet been dug out, and where the minor and most conspicuous peaks have a mean and ruinous aspect.[1]

If he wishes to paint the central snowy range as portions of the landscape rather than to study them for themselves, he should begin with the further side of the Alps. There, even in the clear summer weather, when the Swiss crags seem most hard and near, and the pine-trees crude and stiff, all the hollows of the hills are filled with waves of iridescent air, as if a rainbow had been diffused through the sky. The distances, purple and blue, float before the eye with a soft outline like that of the young horns of a stag. Even the snows are never a cold white; after the red flush of dawn has left them they pass through gradations of golden brightness until, when the sun is gone, they sink into a soft spectral grey. And in the foreground woods of chestnuts and beeches spread their broad branches over wayside chapels bright with colour, and mossy banks the home of delicate ferns and purple-hearted cyclamens. To those who know them the names of Val Rendena, Val Sesia, Val Anzasca, and Val Maggia call up visions of the sweetest beauty. But the whole Italian slope is free at all times from the alleged defects of Swiss scenery. Further east lies the Trentino, where the mountains stand apart and the valleys spread out to an ampler width, where nature is rich and open-handed, and the landscapes unite

[1] A distinction must be made between the scenery of the Engadine itself, and of the Bernina. In the side-glens behind Pontresina, the lover of peak-form and the student of snow and ice will find abundant and singularly accessible subjects.

Alpine nobility of form to the sunny spaciousness and deep colour of Italy. And close at hand, beyond the Adige, is the country of Titian, where the new school may find a precedent and an example in the great painter of Cadore.

But at length when the crowd has departed let the painter in late September or October pass back to the Swiss Alps. However much he may dislike positive colours, he will find subjects to his taste, harmonies in blue and grey, or studies in grey alone, when the thin autumn vapours swim up the valley and entangle themselves amongst the pine-tops, or when the whole heaven is veiled, and

> White against the cold white sky
> Shine out the crowning snows.

Or, if he delights in the subtle play and contrast of colour, he may study the lights and shadows and reflections of the lakes, as the wind and clouds sweep over them, the hue of the hillsides when the purple darkness of the pines becomes a grateful contrast to the rich warm tints of the lower woods, and the rhododendron leaves on the high alps flush with a red brighter than their May blossoms. From some lonely height he may watch the shiftings and gatherings of the mist as it spreads in a 'fleecelike floor' beneath his feet, or the storm-wreaths as they surge in tall columns to the heaven, and break open to reveal a mountain shrine glowing in the rich lights of evening or the pale splendour of a summer moon. He must be a dull man if he does not acknowledge that the mountains have a language worth interpreting, and that to those who can listen, they speak, as Lord Lytton tells us in his pretty fable,

——— With signs all day.
Down drawing o'er their shoulders fair,
This way and that soft veils of air,
And colours never twice the same
Woven of wind, and dew, and flame.

We do not ask or expect many artists to devote themselves to the new country which has been discovered by the Alpine Club above the belt of black and white barrenness which was once thought the typical scenery of the Upper Alps. That there is much that is beautiful, however, in this Wonderland will be readily admitted even by those who doubt whether its beauties are reproducible by art.

The painter who ventures into the snow-world will find, I think, that the subjects it offers divide themselves roughly into three classes: portraits of high peaks; studies of mountain views, that is, of earth and sky-colours blended in the vast distances visible from a lofty stand-point; and studies of snow and ice—of the forms and colours of the snow-field and the glacier. In the first two no conspicuous success has yet been obtained. The great mountains still await their 'vates sacer.'[1] It is in the last-mentioned,

[1] I do not forget the somewhat spasmodic efforts in Alpine painting which have been made in late years by one or two of our landscape-painters. But so far as I know, despite one or two fairly successful beginnings, none of them (except an amateur, Sir Robert Collier) have persevered in the endeavour to represent mountains. Of all men, Mr. Edward Whymper has effected most in this field. His wood engravings show how much may be done even on a very small scale and without colour. A volume of portraits of the great peaks by his hand, an English edition of Herr Studer's, *The Highest Summits of Switzerland, and the Story of their Ascent*, would be welcomed both by lovers of the arts and of the Alps. Mr. Elijah Walton, with much feeling for colour, and occasionally for mountain form, seems to lack the force and perseverance necessary for the production of complete work. He seldom reaches the standard of rock-drawing held up in his own

at first sight the least inviting and most perplexing of the branches of Alpine art, that the greatest efforts have been made and with the most result. Until M. Loppé painted, it was only the mountaineer who knew the beauty of the glacier. Its broken cataracts and wave-filled seas were to the stranger formless, colourless masses. The Genevese painter, by dint of patient study and laborious, if pleasurable, exertion, has revealed its secrets to the world, and more than justified the enthusiasm of the Alpine Club.

M. Loppé's pictures might easily be arranged so as to form a kind of 'glacier's progress.' We first find the snows reposing tranquilly in their high rock-cradle and reflecting on their pure surface the tones of the sky from which they have fallen. Then we have the struggle and confusion which attend the encounter of the young glacier with the first obstacles. An irresistible impulse urges the still half-formed ice over the edge, and it is transformed in a moment into a maze

book, *Peaks in Pen and Pencil*. His sketches are too often scumped, and it is impossible to repress impatience of their mannerism, and of the perpetual blot of mist which he is ever ready to throw in. Nor can I recognise as worthy of such frequent reproduction the merely somewhat fragile, and in nature rare, form of hillside found where, through the friable character of the rock, isolated, pine-tufted blocks are left standing amidst deep trenches. But he can, when he pleases, paint truly and beautifully a dolomite pinnacle, a wall of ice, or a bank of pines. I still hope he may be able to forget some of his favourite efforts, and to give us a series of simple transcripts of fresh impressions from nature, embodied in drawings studied throughout with equal care.

Other water-colour painters have, during the last few seasons, tried their hands on the snowy Alps. We owe gratitude to everyone who aids to raise mountain-drawing from the bathos of such works as those of Collingwood Smith. But I could wish this young school showed less facility and more signs of a progress which is only to be won by thoughtful observation, patience, and refinement. At present their works are seen more often in the rooms of climbers than of connoisseurs.

of towers and blue abysses, of walls of marble-like snow seamed with the soft veins which mark each year's fall, of crystal-roofed and fretted vaults hung with pendant icicles. M. Loppé paints with wonderful skill not only the forms of the 'séracs,' but the shades and hues given by the imprisoned light and reflections to the frozen mass, combining the whole into a harmony of soft pale colour.

Again we meet the glacier, as it is best known to the world, settled down into middle life, but still seamed by the scars of a stormy youth, earthier, more stained and travel-worn than in its first combat. Here the mottled crust, the green light of the smaller crevices, and the wavelike undulations of the surface are represented with admirable fidelity; but we feel the air is less poetic, and a stray tourist does not offend us as out of place. And now we are present at the last struggle where, under a pall of cloud through which the parent peaks shine down a far-off farewell, the glacier makes its fatal plunge into the valley, for it a valley of death, and we see its end amid the earth and rock-heaps of the terminal moraine. But from under the muddy ruin springs out of a 'dusky door' a new and fuller life, and the mountain stream dashes off on its happy course through the new world of the fields and orchards.

So faithful are these pictures that Professor Tyndall would find in them fit illustrations for a popular discourse. So perfect is sometimes the illusion that we should almost fear a modern version of Zeuxis and the birds, and expect to hear the lecturer calling on his assistant to drive stakes into the canvas.

When M. Loppé turns to summit views we feel that

his success is less complete. He has led the way to the

> High mountain platforms
> Where morn first appears;
> Where the white mists for ever
> Are spread and upfurl'd,

and has dared to be the first to depict the mysterious light of the far-off sunrise playing on the highest snows of Mont Blanc, the snowy cantonments of the Alps separated by grey cloud-streams, the gradations from the purple of the zenith to the crocus of the horizon in the vault of heaven seen from 15,000 feet above the sea-level; or the red glow of sunset, when the lowlands are already dark in shadow, and the upper world has a moment of hot splendour before it, too, is overwhelmed by the night.

The deep hues of the upper air, the torn edges of the clouds as they are caught by the morning breeze, bear witness to study on the spot. But we demand more delicacy of aerial effect, greater depth of distance, more precision in the handling of the nearer rock-peaks. The painter clearly spends all his love on snow, and does not care so much for the forms of crags. We miss, too, that combined breadth and subtlety of interpretation which belong only to the very highest genius and which no study or perseverance can impart.

But fault-finding is ungrateful where so much has been dared and accomplished. M. Loppé's pictures are doubtless open to criticism in many respects, and they could hardly be otherwise. But the amount of success he has achieved in a region where no one else had ever dared to venture is surely sufficient to make his example worth more than many precepts. At any rate the moment at which a painter has shown London for the

first time the capabilities for artistic treatment of the most unpromising of mountain-subjects seems a fitting one for urging the general claims of the Alps.

Let it not be said that Englishmen are dead to the finer influences of the eternal hills to which they so much resort. Let our painters avoid hasty conclusions founded on imperfect knowledge, and attempt the mountains with the same energy and perseverance which have made them subject to our athletic youth. Let them be ready to climb enough to understand the scale and nature of the objects they have to paint, and content, like young mountaineers, to spend season after season in slow training and only partial success. Thus, and thus only, can they hope to conquer the beauties of the mountain-world. But the conquest will repay its cost. The existence of a school of intelligent Alpine landscape-painters would contribute in no small degree to the maintenance of Art in her true position, not as 'the empty singer of a bygone day,' but the visible sign and interpreter of the feeling for beauty of the world of our own days. It also could not fail to result in the increased and more intelligent appreciation of some of the highest forms of scenery, and the consequent repression of the tendency to

> Glance and nod and bustle by,

which wastes so many of the hours when our souls should be most receptive.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

NOTES FOR TRAVELLERS.

The following notes have been framed for use with the 'Alpine Guide,' and make no pretence to be complete in themselves. Besides the necessary references to Mr. Ball's book, they consist of such corrections and additions as I should have supplied had a new edition been in immediate prospect. The edition referred to is that in 10 small sections (2*s.* 6*d.* each), Longmans & Co., 1873. The sections which include the country here dealt with are three—'The St. Gothard and Italian Lakes,' 'East Switzerland,' and 'South Tyrol and the Venetian Alps.'

The best maps for use in the country here described are, for ordinary travellers, Mayr's 'Karte der Alpen' (Ostalpen, Sheets 1 and 3) corrected by Berghaus (Perthes, Gotha, 1871), and the Alpine Club Map of the Central Alps, Sheet IV.

Mountaineers will also require the Swiss (Sheet XX.) and Lombardo-Venetian (Sheets B, 3, 4; C, 3, 4; D, 3, 4) Government Maps. The new survey of Tyrol by the Austrian engineers has been completed, and its result will shortly be given to the public. The existing maps of S. Tyrol and the Trentino are most inaccurate.

CHAPTERS I., II.

VAL MAGGIA—VAL VERZASCA—VAL CANOBBINA.

APPROACHES AND CARRIAGE-ROADS.

From central Switzerland by the St. Gothard road or Gries (mule-pass); from the west by the Simplon road and Val Formazza; from the south by Lago Maggiore.

There is an omnibus twice daily up Val Maggia between Locarno and Bignasco, and once daily between Bignasco and Fusio, to which the carriage-road now extends. The carriage-road in Val Verzasca extends to Sonogno, but there is no public conveyance beyond Lavertezzo.

The carriage-road up Onsernone is open as far as Comologno.

The road from Locarno to Domo d'Ossola is not, as stated in the 'Alpine Guide,' practicable throughout for cars. There is a break of some length near the frontier.

The road from Canobbio through Val Canobbina to Val Vigezzo was still incomplete in 1874.

Inns.

Val Maggia.

Cevio. An Inn well spoken of by German travellers.

Bignasco. The house kept by Da Ponte, mentioned in the 'Alpine Guide' still 'very fair' (1874). The 'Posta' supplies clean beds and good country cooking, and is in a charming situation (1874).

Fusio. Inn and pension frequented by Italians, and said by F. Devouassoud to promise well externally (1874).

Val Verzasca.

Lavertezzo. A poor-looking Inn. There is a roadside tavern, where bread and wine may be obtained, below the bridge over the stream of Val d'Osola. At Sonogno there is no inn (1874).

Val Vigezzo.

Santa Maria Maggiore. A fair country Inn (1874).

Peaks and Passes.

The ascent of the lesser peaks of the Thelnsso valleys scarcely repays the labour. The Basodine and Pia Campo Tencca are mentioned among the passes. No riding animals are to be found in Val Maggia: they must be brought from Faido or Premia. The master of the Tosa Falls inn is a good guide to the Basodine, and peasants are doubtless to be found in Val Bavona who would undertake to lead a traveller to the top.

Val Formazza to *Val Maggia.*

Premia or Andermatten to Cevio by Val Bovana, horsepath. See 'Alpine Guide,' vol. ii. p. 311.[1]

Andermatten to Bignasco by the Forcolaccia and Val Bavona, 6½ hrs.; foot.

Andermatten to San Carlo in Val Bavona by Passo d'Antabbia; foot; probably fine.

[1] The references in this Appendix from the first to the eleventh chapter are to vol. ii. of the 3-volume edition of the *Alpine Guide*, which has not been repaged for the 1-volume edition.

Toss Falls to San Carlo and Bignasco; by Passo del Basodino; foot; rope necessary. See p. 15–16:
or Bocchetta di Val Maggia; foot; either pass about 10 hrs.
The Basodino, 10,748 feet, can be climbed in ½ hr. from the former pass. See p. 15.

For the passes from Val Bavona to Airolo, and to Val Peccia. See 'Alpine Guide,' pp. 311, 313.

Val Maggia to Val Leventina.

Airolo to Fusio by Val Lavizzara, see 'Alpine Guide,' p. 311. There is a more direct foot-pass between the two there mentioned, the descent from which on the E. side is by a goat-track down a steep face of rocks.

Faido to Fusio. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 311.

Faido to Broglio and Bignasco by Passo di Campo Tencca. Through the gap between the N. (highest 10,099 ft.) and central peak of Pix C. Tencca; see p. 20–25; foot, 10 hrs. It is not necessary to go round by Prato to enter Val Lavizzara, but the short cut to Broglio is rather difficult to hit off in descending. See p. 20.

Val Maggia to Val Verzasca.

Broglio to Sonogno; Passo di Redorta, through Val di Prato and Val Partasio, foot, 6 hours. See p. 29.

Bignasco to Brione; Passo d'Osola,[1] through Val Cocchio (foot), probably the most interesting path between the two valleys.

I can add no information to that contained in the 'Alpine Guide' as to the other passes from Val Maggia to Val Verzasca, or as to the passes from Val Verzasca to Val Leventina.

Routes.

Carriage travellers can only drive from Domo d'Ossola to Canobbio (with the break mentioned above), and up and down Val Maggia, Val Verzasca, and Val Onsernone.

For riders and moderate walkers perhaps the best route is

From Faido to Fusio by Campolungo Pass, thence to Bignasco; spend a day in Val Bavona, and cross by Val Rovana to Val Formazza or Val Onsernone.

For mountaineers—

Ascend the Basodino from the Toss Falls, descending through Val Bavona to Bignasco; thence cross Pix Campo Tencca to Faido;

[1] This is the spelling of Dufour's map. A second 's' was wrongly inserted in the text after it had left my hands.

drive down to Locarno and up Val Maggia (or by Val Onsernone and Val Rovana) to Bignasco; cross the Passo d'Ossola, returning to Locarno by Val Verzasca.

There are many ways through the hills between Locarno and Domo d'Ossola, but none probably to be preferred to the route through Val Cannobina.

CHAPTERS III., IV.

THE PEAKS AND PASSES OF VAL MASINO.

Approaches and Carriage-roads.

The villages of Val Bregaglia are half-a-day's drive from Pontresina or St. Moritz, or, coming the opposite way, two or three hours from Chiavenna. The baths of Masino are a short day's drive from Colico, or about five hours from Sondrio. The road to the Baths is the only one inside the district practicable for carriages.

Inns.

Bregaglia. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 386.

Maloya. Much improved; good accommodation, but a bear for a landlord (1873).

Val Masino.

I Bagni. Clean beds, untidy rooms, excellent food, and much civility, with rather high prices to passing travellers (1873).

Val Malenco.

Chiesa. Two fair country Inns, improving (1873).

Chiareggio. Very rough quarters, and little food to be depended on (1873).

Val Codera.

Codera. Two very primitive Inns kept by tidy and civil people (Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer').

Passes of Val Masino.

No good glacier guides are to be found in Val Masino or Val Bregaglia. At Chiesa in Val Malenco there are several men who have made glacier excursions, and two or three (Flematti of Spriana, Joli of Torre) who have recently been up the Disgrazia.

I Bagni to Val Codera.

There are three passes, all only practicable on foot: I. Over Alp Ligoncio to a pass at the foot of Monte Lis d'Arnasca and through Val del Passato—the easiest. II. Through Val Porcelliga to

Alp d'Averta. III. A rough way, wrongly marked on maps, between the two last. All lead through gaps in an almost perpendicular granite wall. The scenery of the upper portion of Val Codera is wildly beautiful (Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer').

Forcola di Roccolette.

I Bagni to Castasegna. Two steep and rough foot-passes; crossing between them one of the heads of Val Codera.

Passo di Bondo.

I Bagni to Promontogno. A difficult glacier pass, involving the descent of an ice-wall, only to be attempted by practised climbers. The pass we crossed lies at the head of the most easterly of the glaciers seen from Alp Masera in Porcellizzo. In descending the Bondasca glacier it is generally best to keep to the right. The spot at which to leave the ice for the pastures is easily recognised. See p. 73.

Passo di Ferro.

Val di Mello to Promontogno. A fine glacier pass, difficulty varying according to the state of the crevasses. In ascending from Val di Mello keep the E. side of the Ferro Glacier. See p. 49.

Passo di Zocca. (Forcella di S. Martino of Swiss map.)

Val di Mello to Vico Soprano, a glacier pass well known to people of the country. No difficulty with a rope. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 407.

Passo di Monte Sissone.

Val di Mello to Maloya. See p. 61. A fine and long, but not at all difficult, glacier pass. Monte Sissone is easily recognisable on the S. side. In descending to the Forno Glacier bear along the N.E. ridge until it seems easy to get down. The right-hand side of the glacier is the best.

There are two passes known to the shepherds, connecting respectively the lower portion of the Forno Glacier with the châlets at the foot of the Albigna Glacier, and these with the highest pasturage in Val Bondasca. An active walker starting from the Maloya Inn would have little difficulty in crossing both in the same day. Owing to the much lower level of the starting-point, the excursion, taken the other way, would be too fatiguing to be recommended.

Passo di Mello.

Val di Mello to Chiareggio. Glacier pass, liable to be difficult on the E. side if the rocks are icy or the glacier much crevassed. The gap is that nearest the Pico della Speranza. See p. 68.

Passo della Speranza and *Passo della Preda Rossa.*

Val di Mello to Sasso Bisolo Glacier;

Sasso Bisolo Glacier to Val di Torre;

Form together a high-level route from the Baths to Sondrio, passing under the Disgrazia.

From Val di Mello make for the pass at the W. foot of the Pizo della Speranza; the 2nd pass is conspicuous to anyone on the Sasso Bisolo Glacier. See p. 87.

These are not the passes alluded to by Mr. Ball ('Alpine Guide,' p. 408). There is a lower pass from Val Torreggio to the Sasso Bisolo châlets. The range S.W. of the Disgrazia is very badly laid down in all maps except the A. C. map of Switzerland.

Peaks.

Monte della Disgrazia, 12,057 ft. See p. 84, and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 408.

In ordinary circumstances, about 5 hrs. from the highest Sasso Bisolo châlets, or 8 hrs. from the Baths. Has also been ascended by Italians by the Passo della Preda Rossa starting from the Alpe Rali on the Val Malenco side.

Monte Sissone, 10,800 ft. (?) See Sissone Pass.

Cima di Rosso, 11,024 ft.

From the Maloya, an easy snow-peak, ascent 5 hrs., descent 2½ hrs.

Cima del Largo, 11,162 ft.

From the Maloya; a steep ice-wall near the top. Requires a good guide. Ascent 6 hrs; descent 4½ hrs. This peak can undoubtedly be reached from the head of the Albigna Glacier. See p. 77.

Punta Tschingel, 11,106 ft.

From I Bagni; easy for good walkers. Rope and ice-axe necessary. Ascend glacier W. of the peak and gully at its head to the gap between the P. T. and the Cima di Tschingel. Thence by the ridge. See p. 81.

Cima di Tschingel, 10,853 ft.

From I Bagni, lower and more difficult than the last. Ascent 6 hrs.; descent 4 hrs.

Monte Lis d'Arnasca, 10,500 ft. (?) } No information; quite unknown to
Monte Spluga, 9,933 ft. } English mountaineers.

Routes.

Carriages can only go to the Baths and back. Riders may visit Val Roseduan from Promontogno, the Albigna Glacier from Vico Soprano, the foot of the Forno Glacier from the Maloya Inn, and Alp Mazza in Forcellina from the Baths. For climbers, the following route embraces the most inviting peaks:—Ascend Cima del Largo from Maloya Inn; descend on to

Zoces Pass (new, but perfectly practicable): sleep at La Rasica. Ascend Piagnola, return by Val Sasso Biasio. Order a car from Baths to meet you at Cattuggio. Ascend Punta Trubinasca. Cross by Val Codera to Spligen road. The two last very, no doubt, be combined in the same day.

CHAPTER V.

TARASP AND THE LIVIGNO DISTRICT.

Approaches and Carriage Roads.

From the Rheinthal by the Prätigau and Fluela roads. From the Tyrolese Inthal by the new road from the Finstermünz, through the Lower Engadine. From the Etschthal (Vintschgau), by the Münsterthal and Ofen road (now practicable for carriages, and crossed by a diligence), or by the Stelvio road to the Baths of Bormio. The high-roads of the Val Tellina and Bernina Pass skirt the district on the S. and W.

Inns.

Klosters.

Hotel and Pension Silvretta—frequented by Swiss—good (1865).

Lower Engadine.

Lavin, two new good Inns, Piz Linard, or Post, and Steinbock (1871).

Zernetz. Bär, best (1871).

Livigno. A very rude country Inn (1860).

Val Viola. No inns between La Rosa and Bormio (1873).

Passes from the Southern Rhine Valley into the Lower Engadine.

Fluela Pass, carriage-road. Vereina Pass. Klosters—Süs, rough walk. Verstankla Thor, Klosters—Lavin Glacier Pass, see p. 98. Silvretta Pass, Klosters—Guarda Glacier Pass, see 'Alpine Guide,' p. 358. Grialetsch Pass, Davos-Süs, taking on the way Piz Vadret, a difficult rock-climb.

For the passes from the Tyrolese valleys of Mustafon and Pazzaun see Tschudi's 'Ostschweiz,' Herr Weilenmann's 'Aus der Firnenwelt,' vol. ii., and Weltenberger's 'Rhätikon-Kette, Lechthaler, und Vorarlberger Alpen,' Perthes, 1875 (valuable map), and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 362.

Excursions from Tarasp.

See Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer: Ostschweiz.' Recommended for climbers, Piz Linard, 11,207 ft.; Piz Pisoc, 10,427 ft., or Piz Lischanna, 10,181 ft., returning by the Scarlthal.

Livigno District.—Passes.

Guides competent for any mountaineering in this district can be found at *Zernetz*, and probably also at the Baths of Bormio.

From the Engadine to Val Livigno.

From the Ofenhaus by path through the gorge of the Spöl. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 418.

Through Val Cluoza and Val del Diavel, and over Passo del Diavel, 7½ hrs. See pp. 112-14.

From Scanfs: Cassana Pass, horse-road. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 418.

From Ponte: Lavirum Pass. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 418.

Bernina Häuser by Val del Fain and the Passo della Sforna. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 406.

Passes from Val Livigno to Val Viola.

To Semogo and Bormio by the Passo di Foscagno. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 417. Horse-road.

To Dosdè Alp by Zembrasca Pass, foot. 5½ hrs. easy, and does not lie over ice as marked on most maps.

To Val Viola Poschiavina, by Passo di Mera (P. di Campo of A. C. map), foot. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 415.

To La Rosa by the Forcola and Val Agone, horse-road. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 417.

For the Passo di Val Viola see 'Alpine Guide,' p. 415. Most walkers will require an hour more than the time allowed by Mr. Ball.

Passes between Val Viola and the Val Tellina.

From Campo to Val Grosina; Passo di Verva, mule-road (?) 'Alpine Guide,' p. 404.

From Dosdè Alp to Val Grosina; Passo di Dosdè, Glacier Pass, 6 hrs. to Grosio. See p. 119-20.

Between this and the next there is another glacier pass to be discovered.

From Val Viola Poschiavina, to Val Grosina; Passo di Saoso, 'Alpine Guide,' p. 404.

Livigno District.—Peaks.

Between Engadine and Val Livigno.

Piz Quatervals, 10,558 ft., the highest in this range, easiest from Val Cluoza, but can be reached from any side.

Piz d'Esen 10,269 ft. from Scanfs.

Between Val Livigno and Val Viola.

Monte Foscagno, 10,130 ft. (?) } No information.
Monte della Mine, 10,800 ft. }

Monte Zembrasca, 10,790 ft. (?), 10,827 Studer.

The ground at the head of Val Tressenda is very inaccurately laid down on all maps. I assume the snow-peak conspicuous at the head of Val Tressenda to be Monte Zembrasca, and the slightly higher rock summit lying further E. to be the Monte delle Mine.

Punta del Campo, 10,843 ft. (Monte Vazzagna of A. C. map) ascended in 1866.

Between Val Viola and Val Tellina.

Cima di Piazza, 11,712 ft. (?), first ascended in 1867 by Herr Weilenmann, 6½ to 7½ hrs. from Baths of Bormio; 2½ to châlets of Madonna d'Oga, then leaving the Cima San Colombano on the left, in 4½ hrs. to the top—rope required.

Pizzo di Dosdè; unascended from Dosdè Alp. [Correct 'Alpine Guide,' p. 416, column 1, line 9 from bottom, by omitting words from *ascended* to *Walder*.]

Corbe di Lago Spalmo, 10,950 ft., highest peak unascended; the 2nd reached in 1866.

Corno di Dosdè, 10,597 ft. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 416.

Cima di Sesmo, unascended, 10,729 ft.

Punta di Teo, 10,007 ft., from Poschiavo or La Rosa, a sharp scramble at the end.

Pizzo di Scais, 10,099 ft.

Routes.

Carriage travellers can drive over the Flüela and Ofen Passes, and thence by the Stelvio to the Lombard Alps.

Moderate walkers and riders should ascend the Schwarzhorn from the Flüela, go from Tarasp by the Scarlthal to the Ofenhaus and Livigno, and thence by the Passo di Foscagno and Passo di Verva to the Val Tellina.

For walkers a good route is by Silvretta Glacier to Lower Engadine, ascend Piz Linard or Piz Pisoc, returning by Scarlthal to Zernetz. Livigno by Passo del Piavel; to châlets of Monte Elin in Val Viola by Passo di Foscagno; ascend Cima di Piazza, and descend through Val Grosina or to the Baths of Bormio.

CHAPTER VI.

BERGAMASQUE VALLEYS.

Approaches and Carriage-roads.

The Milan-Lecco and Milan-Bergamo railroads, the Val Tellina; the high-roads from Bergamo, Brescia, and the Val Camonica to Clusone; Varenna and Bellano on the Lago di Como, are also good starting-points.

There are carriage-roads up all the main valleys, but none between them, except in the case of Val Seriana and Val di Scalve.

Inns.

Esino. Food for the Grigna can be procured at the first house in the upper village (1874).

Introbbio. The Albergo delle Miniere is closed, and there is only a very indifferent country Inn, 'Osteria Antica,' in the middle of the town (1874).

Val Brembana.

Val Torta. Bread, eggs, and wine may be had here.

There is a good country Inn at the cross-roads below Olmo (1874).

Branzi. The accommodation has been improved. Very civil but slow people (1874).

San Pellegrino. Bath-house, with warm iron springs.

Zogno. Inn strongly recommended by Herr Tschudi as a comfortable centre for excursions.

S. Omobono in Val Imagna. Bath-house; iron springs.

Val Seriana.

Bondione. Very rough, but clean beds (1874).

Gromo. Capital country Inn, with quick hostess (1874).

For other Inns, *see* 'Alpine Guide.'

Routes.

In this region every gap between two peaks is passable, and most of them are used more or less by the people of the country. For a detailed account of many of these side glens and byways the reader is referred to Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer,' vol. iii. 'Ostschweiz,' a very handy work.

It is only possible here to indicate a few routes and excursions. Carriage travellers must in each valley return the way they came; except that, from Clusone, they may turn eastwards to the Lago d'Iseo.

1. (Described in the text as far as Monte Glena) Monte Grigna, Introbbio, Val Torta, Branzi, Passo di Gorniga, Bondione, Monte Glena, descend to Schilpario in Val di Scalve, cross one of the passes to Val Camonica, or drive back to Clusone (5 days).
2. From Lecco through Val Imagna to Almenno and Val Brembana, from Zogno by Oltre il Colle to Ponte di Nossa and Clusone, ascend Presolana, and descend through the lower Val di Scalve to Val Camonica (3 days).
3. From Sondrio ascend Corno Stella (8,595 ft.) by a path recently made by the Italian Alpine Club; descend to Branzi; cross Passo di Gorniga, or by the sources of the Brembo to Fiumenero; ascend Monte Redorta (9,975 ft.) and return to Sondrio (3 days).

Other excursions to be recommended are the ascents of Monte Arnalta, or rather the exploration of the glens round its base, and the ascent of the Pizzo dei Tre Signori. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 462.

CHAPTERS VII., VIII., IX., X., XI.

ADAMELLO AND BRENTA GROUPS.

Approaches and Carriage-roads.

From the Engadine by the Bernina and Aprica Passes, 2 days' drive from Pontresina to Edolo. From Lago di Como by the Val Tellina and Aprica Pass, a day and a half's drive from Colico to Edolo. From Bergamo or Brescia by Lago d'Iseo and Val Camonica, a day and a half's drive to Edolo. From Brescia by Lago d'Idro and Tione to Pinzolo, 2 days' drive. From Riva by Lago di Ledro and Tione, a day and a half's drive, or by Alle Sarche, a day's drive, to Campiglio. From Trent by Vezzano and Alle Sarche to Campiglio, a day. From San Michele by Val di Non to Malè, one day from Botzen. From Sta. Catarina by the Gavia Pass to Ponte di Legno (mule-road).

The only carriage-passes in this district are the Aprica and Tonale. A new carriage-road from Pinzolo to Campiglio is just opened. It is proposed to carry it on over the Ginevrio Pass to Val di Sole.

Inns.

Val Camonica.

Edolo. Due Mori, fair and reasonable (1874).

Ponte di Legno. Inn clean, good food, civil people (1875).

Celegolo. Fair accommodation; exorbitant charges (1874).

Val di Sole

Malè. Exorbitant charges (J. G. 1874).

Fucine, Dimaro. Fair country Inns; clean beds (1871).

Pejo. Slow and slovenly people, bad food (1871).

Rabbi. Rough, but clean beds, and enough to eat (1873).

Campiglio. Inn and Pension. Accommodation good, food indifferent, charges somewhat high. Reductions and great improvements promised for this year (1875), when it reopens under a new management.

Giudicaria.

Pieve di Bono. Fair country Inn (1874).

Pieve di Ledro. Inn and Pension. Fairly comfortable (1874).

Baths of Comano. Good food and accommodation (1874).

Tione. Cavallo Bianco, a good country Inn (1874).

Pinzolo. Bonapace's. Food and lodging much improved; great civility (1874).

" Posta. Also well spoken of by English visitors (1874).

Strigno. A fair country Inn (1874).

THE ADAMELLO GROUP.

Passes.

Passo delle Malghette.
Campiglio to Pelizzano—5½ hours, easy.

Passo di Cercen.
Bedole Alp to Vermiglio 7–8 hrs., rope required. See p. 203.

Passo di Presena.
Mandron hut to Vermiglio.

Bocchetta di Marocaro, &c. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 476.

Passo del Mandron.
Bedole Alp to Val d'Avio and Ponte di Legno, easy glacier pass. 9–10 hrs. See p. 227.

Passo d'Avio.
Gap at N. base of Adamello; difficult descent into Val d'Avio.

Passo d'Adamello.
Bedole Alp to Edolo. Gap near S. foot of Adamello; tolerably easy descent into Val Miller, 6 hrs. up, 6 down. See p. 218.

Passo d'Adame.
Bedole Alp to Cedegolo. A long but easy glacier pass.

Passo di Fum.
Val di Fum to Val di Genova, by Passo dei Topeti. A direct descent of the Lobbia Glacier has yet to be effected.

Passo di San Valentino. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 480.

Passo di Bregnzza.
Val di Fum to Bregnzzo; easy.

High-level route from Val di Borzago to Val d'Avio.
From Val Rendena to highest hut in Val di Borzago, 4½ hrs.; Carè Alto, 4 hrs.; Passo di Cavento. Lares—Fum Glaciers 2½; Passo della Lobbia Alta; Lobbia—Mandron Glaciers, 1; Passo di Mandron, 1½ hr.; down to Ponte di Legno, 4 hrs.; four hours shorter without the Carè Alto. See p. 224.

Peaks.

Presanella, 11,688 ft.—3 routes.
1. From Passo di Cercen—up, 3½ hrs., down, ¾ hr. See p. 199.
2. From Val di Genova by Val Gabbiol.
3. From Val Nambrone or Pinzolo by the Nardis Glacier—the easiest—a day and a half from Campiglio or Pinzolo.

Adamello, 11,637 ft.—5 routes.

1. From Bedole Alp, ascent 6½ hrs., easy. See p. 211.
2. From Alp in Val d'Avio by P. di Mandron, easy, and not longer than from Bedole.
3. From Alp in Val d'Avio by Passo d'Avio, more direct, but difficult.
4. From Val Miller, not difficult with a good guide, when the rocks are free from ice, but unknown to the people of the country.
5. From Val di Salarno or Val d'Adame, easy.

A good day's walk for an active mountaineer, from the Bedole Alp, over the Adamello, to Ponte di Legno, Edolo, or Cedegolo.

Corè Alto, 11,257 ft. (more probably 11,500). See p. 224.

From highest comfortable chalet in Val di Borzago, 6 hrs. by the W. ridge. The E. ridge may prove possible and shorter. It is possible to descend over the Lares Glacier into Val di Genova, to pass through the Passo di Cavento into Val di Fum, or to take the course to Val Camonica above referred to. A direct ascent of the peak from Val di Fum looks very difficult.

The minor summits of this group have not all been attained; there are some which appear to offer serious difficulties.

THE BRENTA GROUP.

PASSES.

Passo del Grostè.

Campiglio—Flavona Alp, 4 hrs., easy.

Bocca di Vallezza.

Flavona Alp—Val delle Seghe—Molveno. Rough walking, difficult to find in fog, and not known in the country. In descending, keep near the stream down to the bottom of the first step, afterwards on the left bank, recrossing at the plain where the two branches of Val delle Seghe unite.

Passo di Flavona.

Flavona Alp—Spor. Easy mule-road.

From the Flavona Alp a rough cart-track leads through Val Teresena to Tuenno in Val di Non in 4½ hrs. See p. 270.

Bocca delle Vallesinella.

Campiglio by the Vallesinella to N. branch of Val delle Seghe. A fine pass, crosses a glacier, 7–8 hrs.

Bocca di Brenta. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 487.

At least 9 hrs. from Pinzolo to Molveno.

Passo d'Ambiès. See p. 257.

Pinzolo or Campiglio to Baths of Comano, 10–11 hrs.; requires a good guide or practised climber and a rope. From Bocca dei

Cunzoni (see post) turn left to gap in snowy ridge at head of Val Agola Glacier. Descend trough at S. corner of gap into head of Val d'Ambies. It is much the same distance whether the traveller goes at once into the glen, or skirts to the right before descending. Tracks are seen found in either case.

Pass from Val d'Ambies to Val Cedeh and Molveno, not difficult.

Pass from Val d'Ambies to Val d'Algone; no information, but certainly easy.

Pra Fiori Pass Pinzolo—Val d'Algone, a good mule-path, 3 to 3½ hrs. to glassworks; thence carriage-road to Stenico.

Peaks.

R. Nicolosi of Molveno is an excellent guide for the Brenta group. He is strong, skilful, and always in a good temper.

No information as to the minor peaks N. of the Cima di Brenta, the Sasso Alto, Sasso Rosso, Mondifra and Cima di Groste. It is believed they have been ascended from Campiglio.

Cima di Brenta, 10,615 ft.

Up 5 hrs., down 3 hrs. Follow path through wood, round S. base of Monte Spinale; ascend the Vallesinella to the châlet, cross stream, and climb zigzag path to brow overlooking Val Brenta. Skirt Val Brenta side of some rocks, then recross into head of the Vallesinella; ascend glacier seen among the cliffs right. From platform at its head climb rocks left, and pass over the first to the highest peak. See p. 264.

2nd route, from *Bocca della Vallesinella*.

Cut up steep snow-slope S. of Bocca, and keep close to the E. side of a small glacier—up 1½ hr., down 20 m.

Cima Tosa, 10,790 feet. See p. 275 and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 489.

Cima di Nardis, or *Cinglo di Mordisa*, 10,000 ft. (?) The peak visible from Pinzolo. Unascended.

EXCURSIONS FROM PINZOLO.

Guides recommended by the Trentine Alpine Society—G. Botteri, employed by Payer; G. Catturani, has ascended the Adamello; Antonio dalla Giacoma, detto Lusion da Cadarone; all know the Presanella. Good donkeys, but no mules or side-saddles, are to be had at Pinzolo. B. Nicolosi, of Molveno, has been up the Cará Alto. N. Clemente of Rincone (near Tesno) knows Val di Fum. Francesco P. Peotta and Sebastiano D. Boer, both of Stenico, for Val d'Algone and the Cima Tosa (?)

For moderate walkers.

Pra Fiori. Along ridge to Dos di Sabione, descend through Val Agola, 6 to 8 hrs.

For other excursions in the Brenta group, see Campiglio.

In the Adamello range,—

La Porta dell' Ansola. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 471.

Lago di San Giuliano and Corno Alto. Must command fine views.

Bedole and Venezia châlets. 8 hrs. there and back; car-road for some miles, then horse-path 'Alpine Guide,' p. 475.

Val di Borzago. 1 hrs. drive, to Borzago 2 hrs. walk, up valley. *Should, if possible, be combined with Corno Alto.*

For climbers. See Peaks and Passes, ante.

EXCURSIONS FROM CAMPIGLIO.

Guides. See Pinzolo. A forester can generally be found, and, except on snow or ice, these men are as a rule quite capable. Donkeys may be hired, and side-saddles are promised for 1875. Visitors will find it easy to add largely to the list given below.

For moderate walkers.

Monte Spinale, 3 hrs. easy walking.

Monte Ritorto, a little longer.

Vallesinella and tour of Monte Spinale—a beautiful walk.

Vallesinella. Follow path to Cima Tosa (see ante), but instead of recrossing into Vallesinella, follow track right, leading to upper level of Val di Brenta—the finest easy excursion.

To head of Val di Brenta, 5 to 6 hrs. there and back.

Val Agola. Dos di Salions, Pinzolo; or Val Agola, Glassworks in Val d'Algone, Pinzolo. See ante.

For climbers.

Bocca dei Camozzi, Campiglio—Pinzolo. Mount glacier S.W. of Cima Tosa to head, descend glacier falling towards Val Agola, leaving it on its left bank. 11 hrs.; rope necessary; a magnificent walk.

See Peaks and Passes, ante. The Cima Tosa and Cima di Brenta can be ascended without sleeping out.

ROUTES.

For riders and carriage travellers.

Cross the Aprica, and Tonale Passes, Val di Sole, Ginevria Pass, Campiglio, Pinzolo, Tione, Riva, by Lago di Ledro, Baths of Comano, Stenico, Molveno, San Michele.

For walkers.

Coming from the Ortler. For High Passes from Santa Catarina to Val di Sole, see Appendix C. Over the Presanella to Pinzolo and Campiglio; over Cima di Brenta to Molveno; return by Cima Tosa to Pinzolo, Val di Genova, Adamello, Ponte di Legno; [or Adamello, Val Saviore, Val di Fum, Carè Alto by Passo di Cavento, descending to Tione by Val di Borzago.]

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRIMIERO DISTRICT.

Approaches.

From the West.

By the high-road from the railroad at Neumarkt, passing through Predazzo. Carriage-road from Trent, through Val Sugana to Strigno and Tesino; thence mule-path.

From the South.

By the high-road from Vicenza, through Bassano to Fonzaso, and thence up the valley of the Cismone to Primiero (carriage-road, with a break of 10 miles between Fonzaso and Ponteto).

From the East.

From Cortina (mule-road), or Belluno (carriage-road) to Val d'Agordo and thence by mule-path, or to Fonzaso *viâ* Feltre and thence as above.

From the North.

From railroad at Brock, Atzwang, or Botzen, over Selseer Alp or Carezza Pass, to Campidello or Vigo (mule-paths); thence road to Predazzo, Paneveggio, and over Costonzella Pass.

Inns.

Paneveggio.

The old Hospice is well kept. There is one good bedroom, and 4 others tolerable, and the fare is reasonably good (1872).

San Martino di Castrozza.

A large new Inn and Pension is to be opened here this year (1875).

Agordo.

The Inn here has been hardly treated by some recent travellers. It fully deserves the praise given in the 'Alpine Guide' (1872).

Passes.

ROUND THE PRIMIERO GROUP.

Passo di Gaiello.
Passo di Cereda.

Agordo-Primiero, good and much frequented mule-path —7 to 8 hrs. See p. 286 and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 468. Food can be got at the villages on the way, and wine at a little inn beautifully situated near the second pass.

Passo di Costonzella.

Primiero, S. Martino, Paneveggio, Predazzo. Good carriage-road. See p. 284 and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 458 (vol. iii.).

Passo di Valles.

Paneveggio to Canonaghe, Agordo or Capelle; mule-road; 'Alpine Guide,' p. 488.

ACROSS THE GROUP.

Passo di Travignolo.

Paneveggio to Gares, through the gap between the Cimon della Pala and Vezzana, would be more difficult the other way; rope and ice-axes required. (6½ hrs.) See p. 297.

Passo delle Cornelle.

San Martino to Gares; no difficulty, but rough walking. See p. 294 and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 469.

Passo ?

San Martino to Valle di San Lucano. From the Passo delle Cornelle strike across the table-land to the route of the Passo di Canale, near the Coston di Miel. The distance between the tracks of these two passes would probably be little more than an hour. Not yet made (?) but certainly easy.

Passo di Val Pravitale.

Gares, or San Martino to Val di Pravitale, and Primiero. A rough but easy walk.

Passo di Canale.

Primiero—Valle di San Lucano—Agordo. See p. 288; 'Alpine Guide,' p. 469.

The various passes over the table-land behind the Primiero peaks can be combined at discretion. It would be quite possible, for instance, to go from Paneveggio to Primiero, by the Passo di Travignolo and the Passo di Val Pravitale, ascending either the Vezzana or the Fradusta.

The passes between the Primiero valley and Val di Mel await exploration. The route over Monte Pavione is described in the 'Alpine Guide,' p. 456.

PEAKS.

IN THE PRIMIERO GROUP.

Cima Fiscalone. Unascended.

Cima di Vezzana. Easy from Gares by the route of the Passo di Travignolo, more difficult from Paneveggio.

Cimon della Pala. Very difficult; only to be attempted with first-rate guides, and from the side of Paneveggio.

Cima della Rosetta. Easy ½ hr. from Passo delle Cornelle.

Pelle di San Martino. Unascended.

Cima di Ball. Tolerably easy from the Val Pravitale.

San Maur. Unascended.

Cima Cimedo. Unascended; probably easy.
Cima della Fradusta. Easy from Val Pravitale.
Cima di Canale. } Easy from Passo di Canale.
Cantun di Miel. }
Sasso di Campo. } Unascended.
Sasso Ortiga. }

The principal outlying peaks towards Val d'Agordo are Monte Agnaro, Monte San Lucano, Cima di Pape. The last is a fine view point, easily accessible from Cencnighe.

S. OF PASSO DI GOSALDO.

Il Pic. Unascended (the height is often under-estimated; it must be about 9,569 ft.).

EXCURSIONS FROM PRIMIERO.

See Ball's 'Alpine Guide,' p. 456.

Mountaineers can ascend to the table-land by any one of the glens, and return by another. See Peaks and Passes, ante. There are no good guides as yet at Primiero. There are fair men at Cortina and Caprile, a day's journey east. To moderate walkers the following excursions are recommended by Mr. Gilbert.

I. Down the Valley to Mezzano, and up the very fine gorge of the Noana. The ravine may be followed till a small malga upon an alp is reached; then turning N., the deep valley of the Asinozza is crossed, and bearing to the left, the Capella di S. Giovanni, upon a charming little alp, may be visited. Thence resume the Northern course, and descend direct upon Primiero. This is a pleasant round for ladies.

II. Cross the bridge to Ormanico, and ascend the hill behind the village; an easy path works up a small valley, turning eventually upon the side of the hill that impends over the Castello della Pietra. Here is a terrace path, at a considerable height, which, with the open alp beyond, commands a striking view of Val di Canale, and of the array of peaks at its head.

III. The finest walk from Primiero is certainly past the Castello della Pietra up Val di Canale. Arriving at the entrance of Val Pravitale the path up the Val di Canale may be pursued a short distance, and then turning to the left a path may be taken along the ridge overlooking Val Pravitale, and commanding fine views of it, and of the San Maur opposite.

IV. The new road to San Martino di Castrozza affords the best general view of the Primiero Dolomites, and an agreeable variation is obtained by ascending the hills on the left towards Mts. Scanaiol,

and visiting the Lago Calaita, at foot of Mte. Arzon, which ought to offer a good panoramic view of the district. I have not heard of anyone ascending it. From the Lago Calaita, a bare scene, the Val di Lauen might be descended till it joins the Canale di S. Boro, not far from the wild Lago Nuovo. But the traveller returning to Primiero ought to turn S. before the village of Prado, cross a low ridge, and either descend by the regular mule-track through the Cismone valley, or follow a charming path which runs along the N. slope of the valley high above Imer and Mezzano.

V. Ascent of Mte. Pavione. Very interesting view to South. Ladies can ride to foot of final peak. Two routes, one through the Noana gorge for some distance. Four hours to summit from Primiero. Belluno, Venice, and Aquileia visible in clear weather. Dolomites not well shown.

Routes.

For riders.

Agordo, Excursion to Valle di San Lucano, Primiero by mule-road. Drive to Paniveggio, return by Passo di Valles to Agordo or Caprile.

For walkers.

From Agordo by Passo di Canale to Primiero. To San Martino by Val Pravitale and Cima della Rosetta. To Paniveggio by Laghi di Colbricon; thence to Gares by Passo di Travignolo, ascending Cima di Vezzana on the way.

CHAPTER XIII.

VAL DI ZOLDO.

Inns.

See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 524.

A good new Inn, Hotel Antelao, has lately been opened at San Vito, on the Auronzo road.

Approaches.

Val di Zoldo is enclosed on three sides between the carriage-road of the Val d'Agordo and the Auronzo, 'strada regia,' and on the fourth by the mule-pass from S. Vito to Caprile. It is only accessible by horse-paths, and the best starting-points are Longarone, Tai di Cadore, San Vito, Caprile, and Agordo.

Peaks.

Pelmo, 10,377 ft. See p. 314 and 'Alpine Guide,' p. 525; 1st column, 13 lines from bottom, read, 'from the S. and E. sides of the mountain.' The route from Zoppé is the same as that from Borca followed by Mr. Ball. Agosto di Marco of Brusadaz is a good guide.

Civetta, 10,440 ft. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 526.

Monte Moscosin.
Monte Vescova. } E. of Agordo.
Monte Pelf.

Sasso di Bosco Nero. } Unascended. E. of Forno di Zoldo.
Monte Sforaini.

Passes.

Forcella del Sasso di Bosco Nero.

Forno di Zoldo to Ospitale. Descend the valley to a point 10 min. beyond the octagon oratory of San Giovanni, pass below Fagare, and cross (40 min.) to the left bank of Val Bosco Nero; ascend valley to pass (1 hr. 50 min.); descend into Val di Campestrin and the Casera di Val Bona, and thence by a path on the left side of the torrent into the valley of the Piave (2 hrs.). M. Holzmann.

Forcella Cibiana.

Forno di Zoldo to Venas, horse-path. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 524.

Zoppé to Vodo, horse-path. See 'Alpine Guide,' p. 523.

Passo di Rutorto.

Zoppé or San Nicolò to San Vito, horse-path skirting the base of the Pelmo (about 5 hrs.).

Forcella Staulanza.

Pecol to Val Fiorentina, and by Forcella Forada to San Vito. This with the Passo di Rutorto completes the circuit of the Pelmo. It is easy to cross from the Campo di Pelmo to the Forcella Staulanza without descending into Val di Zoldo, so that this circuit can well be made in a day by an active walker.

Passo d'Alleghe.

Pecol to Alleghe or Caprile, mule-path. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 526.

Passo di Duran.

Agordo to San Tiziano. 'Alpine Guide,' p. 524.

Passo Moscosin. Agordo to Forno di Zoldo.

This pass is the depression between Monte Pincedel and Monte Moscosin. It connects the heads of Val Crana and Val Pramper di Zoldo. The Passo Pramper, between Monte Pramper and

Monte Vescova, mentioned in the 'Alpine Guide' as leading from Forno di Zoldo to Agordo, would necessitate crossing three ridges, and passing through Val Prampèr di Zoldo, Val Prampèr di Grisol, Val di Rossi, Val Cresa, and the valley of the Rosdina, and it would be shorter to pass from the upper part of the latter into the valley of the Misiaga. M. Holzmann.

Passo di Lavarede. Agordo to Longarone, by Val di Vescova.

This is a low pass S. of Monte Vescova, crossing the ridge near the châlets of Lavarede.

APPENDIX B.

PICTURES AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE BERGAMASQUE VALLEYS.

Alzano Maggiore (5 kilomètres N. of Bergamo). In the parish church, fine picture of Lorenzo Lotto representing St. Peter Martyr (see Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 'History of Painting in North Italy,' vol. ii. p. 545), and another worth notice by Appiani. The pulpit in marble, with Caryatids and base-reliefs by Andrea Fantoni. In the sacristy, a set of most beautiful carvings and inlaid works by Fantoni and Caniana, of the seventeenth century.

Ciera (5 kilomètres N. of Alzano). Altarpiece with carvings and statues in wood, and paintings on panel, attributed to Cima di Conegliano (to Francesco Santa Croce, C. and C., vol. ii. p. 542), a work of great beauty.

Albino (Valle Seriana). In the parish church pictures of G. B. Moroni and Talpino.

Fiorano (Valle Seriana). Very beautiful altarpiece by G. B. Moroni.

Costa (in Val di Gorno). At the church of the Madonna del Frassino on the eastern slopes of Monte Alben. Fine picture in compartments of Girolamo Santa Croce.

Parre (Valle Seriana). Much extolled picture of G. B. Moroni.

Clusone (Valle Seriana). On the outer walls of the Chapel of the Confraternità, fresco representing the triumph of Death, recalling the celebrated Dance by Holbein; the style is Tuscan (C. and C., vol. ii. p. 535).

In the neighbouring *Rovetta*, birthplace of the carver and sculptor Fantoni, rich collection of work and models of the family Fantoni, who were for more than three centuries distinguished as wood-carvers and sculptors in marble, and whose works are found throughout the valley.

Fino. In a small church, fine picture of G. B. Moroni.

Gromo (Val Seriana). Picture attributed to Talpino, and remarkable church furniture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Trescorre (14 kilomètres E. of Bergamo; sulphurous baths) Capella de' Sajanili, entirely covered with frescoes by Lorenzo Lotto, a most important work in his best manner, damaged in parts (C. and C., vol. ii. pp. 515-517).

Zandobbio (near Trescorre). Beautiful confessional and wood carvings by Fantoni.

Gorlago (in the parish church), three pictures by Moroni, the best is 'The Adoration of the Magi;' also his last work representing 'The Last Judgment' (much damaged).

West of Bergamo, near Almenno, on the right bank of the Brembo, is a circular church of the sixth or seventh century, one of the most remarkable architectural remains of its epoch in North Italy.

Serina in Val d'Ambria (side valley of Val Brembana). In the parish church several pictures (damaged) by Palma il Vecchio, who was born here. In the Chiesa dei Frati, a Crucifixion by Palma il Giovane, dozing (C. and C., vol. i. p. 281, vol. ii. pp. 467-8 and 513).

In another small church a very fine picture of the Venetian School in the manner of Titian.

Corsello (Val Brembana above S. Pellegrino). Remains of the old house of the ancestors of Tasso.

Fondra (Val Brembana). Paintings by Benvenuto da Garofalo.

Averara (Val Brembana above Olmo). In the parish church a fine picture of Guerinoni (Bergamasque School, about A.D. 1576).

Mezzoldo (Val Brembana). Valuable Ancona in the choir by Lattanzio da Rimini, A.D. 1665.

Dossena (Val Brembana). Important picture by Palma il Vecchio, a good deal injured. Most beautiful Paul Veronese, another also noteworthy picture of the Venetian School, perhaps by Benifazio Bembo.

Tschudi's 'Schweizerführer' speaks also of Tintoretto at Casnigo and Vertova in Val Seriana, and mentions several other village churches as containing pictures of the Brescian School. Tassi's 'Lives of the Bergamasque Painters,' Bergamo, 1707, may also be studied by those who wish for further information. There is a copy in the British Museum.

APPENDIX C.

ROUTES FROM SANTA CATARINA TO VAL DI SOLE.

The following notes of two routes from Santa Catarina to Val di Sole may be useful to good walkers who wish to avoid the long circuit by the Gavia and Tonale or the dull Passo dei Tre Signori.

I. *Santa Catarina to Peio, by the Passo della Mare* (Punta di San Matteo of Payer). The ascent of this peak from the Gavia Glacier is an easy but interesting walk, and the view on a clear day unsurpassed in extent in the Alps, reaching from Monte Viso to the Ankogel above Gastein. The summit is at times a great wave of snow overhanging the Forno Glacier; care should be taken therefore in approaching the edge. From the peak a perfectly easy route, first found by Lieutenant Payer, leads down into Val della Mare by the Gº. degli Orsi. This glacier lies considerably to the E. of the peak, and on the southern side of the pass (Passo degli Orsi) at the extreme head of the Forno Glacier. Its icefall is turned by the rocky slopes on the left; below this it is best to descend at once into the valley rather than to follow a tempting path leading along the hillside to the left, which comes to a sudden end in a wood. This route occupies nine hours, or only one more than the Passo dei Tre Signori.

II. *Santa Catarina to Rabbi by Monte Cevedale and the Passo della Venezia.* From Santa Catarina, Monte Cevedale may be ascended through Val Cedeh, in about six hours. To reach Rabbi, the following directions must be followed: Having returned to the gap between the two summits (Mr. Tuckett's Fürkele Joch), traverse the crevassed southern face of the eastern peak to the ridge descending to the Hohenferner Joch. Follow this ridge, cross the gap, and keep along the rocky crest dividing the Val della Mare from the Martell Thal. After an easy ascent, a small glacier will be crossed, and the crest again struck to the east of the stonemen, marking the second pass mentioned by Mr. Ball ('Alpine Guide,' vol. ii. p. 428).[1] Then climb the shoulder of the Passo della Venezia to a point scarcely 150 feet below that rather insignificant summit. Few passes in the Alps command views equal to those of the central mass of the Ortler obtained between the

[1] In the '*Karte der Ortlergruppe*,' published under the authority of the German Alpine Club and to be seen at Santa Catarina, the route can be followed with perfect accuracy. Ball's Hohenferner Joch is there Fürkel Schartle, and his second and merely pass, the Hohenferner Joch. The Vedretta della Venezia between the Vedretta Cevedale. The small glacier falling towards Val di Rabbi is well shown, but the ground below it is left vague. In this map the whole southwest limb of the Ortler group is most inaccurately represented, and might better have been left a blank.

Hohenforno Joch and this point, including on the one hand the bold peaks of the Königspitze, Zebru, and Ortler itself; on the other, the vast snowy masses which surround the Forno Glacier, sending down on this side also large glaciers into Val della Mare. The Cevedale Ferner are well seen, and, in the opposite direction, the whole height of the Presanella, a splendid object rising behind the meadows of Val di Pejo. A descent of five minutes leads to the level snow-fields of the Vedretta della Venezia, which are crossed to a broad gap, forming the highest pass between the Val della Mare and the Rabbi valley. Its height (about 10,300 feet) is sufficient to overlook the opposite eastern ranges, and to command a wide prospect over the fertile hills of the Nonsberg and the rich Trentino, fenced in like a garden by the distant spikes of the Rozen and Primiero Dolomites.

In descending, keep at first on the left side of the small glacier: from the platform below its foot, bear to the right, to the highest pasturage, then to the left over a grassslope, leading to a stream which must be crossed. The precipices which now stop the way have to be turned by keeping well to the left, and scrambling down a steep but easy gully which leads to a track near the foot of one of the great steps in the valley. The path follows the right bank down three steep and stony descents separated by small plains. Below the last, and near some cottages, it crosses the stream, and after a time begins to ascend along the hillside towards the village of Pizzuolo. For the Baths it is best to follow a water course, and then run down into the level meadows which extend for a mile above the mineral source.

This route is very direct, free from difficulty, and, though long, not too laborious, involving only one ascent of about 1,000 ft. The latter part of it is of course equally available for mountaineers crossing from the Sulzbenthal to Rabbi, as Monte Cevedale can be ascended from St. Gertrud in about the same time as from Santa Catarina. Our times were: ascent of Monte Cevedale, 6 hrs.; to shoulder of Pizzo Venezia, 3 hrs.; to pass overlooking Val di Rabbi, 50 min.; descent to Baths, 3 hrs. Total, 12 hrs. 50 min., without halts.

APPENDIX D.

THE CHURCHES OF VAL RENDENA.

By the kindness of Signori Marchetti and Menegazzi, the President and Secretary of the Trentino Alpine Society, I am able to furnish the following copy of the inscription in San Stefano. They warn me that the transcription

probably not altogether accurate. Having received it only at the last moment before publication, I have been unable to consider it as carefully as I should have wished :—

'Hoc est capitulum prelibati Sancti Stephani de Rendena. Carolus Magnus de Francia[1] congregavit consilium unum consulem comes venendi in partes Hyspe[2] et duxerat secum 1000 latrones et venivlat ad civitatem Bergami de qua erat dominus unus qui nominabatur dux Lupus qui erat paganus. Et predictus Carolus certabat secum extra convertendi ipsum.

'Qui dux cepit Sanctum et multos alios, qui fecit eos decapitare et quos decapitaverunt Sanctum VI cervi ardentes nullo eos tangente apparuerunt ey dixi et gentiles circumstantibus et campane per Dey gratiam et sine aliquo auxilio mundano pulsaverunt. Et hoc fuit per signum sanctitatis predicti Sanctri et viso isto miraculo predictus dux Lupus cum tota sua gente conversus est ad

'sanctissimam fidem. Qui predictus dux Lupus post modum venit cum predicto Carulo Magno ad unum castelum quod vocatur Sanctus Johannes de Calle[3] in qui castelo morabatur unus qui nominabatur Alorus. Qui Alorus cum vidit tantam gentem circumstantem eso castelo conversus est ad Christi fidem. Qui predictus Alorus misit unum nuncium ad unum castelum quod dicitur castelum Asconi cujus

'castelli erat dominus unus qui nominabatur Lanzilaus judeus. Et gratia sacrosancte trinitatis predictionem vultis Orisle[4] quæ fabella erat. Et predictus Carulus venit in valem Orislam et ivit ad unum castelum quod vocatur Jesa[5] cujus castelli erat dominus unus judeus qui nominabatur Heracles quem Carulus interfecit quia noluit converti se. Et ibi fecit hedificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancte Trinitatis cui ecclesie VII

'episcopi consecraverunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singulo die et dominus Pontifex concessit 1460 annos indulgentie. Et predictus Carulus recessit ivit ad partem Illorie[6] et ibi erat unus castellanus qui nominabatur Julius qui nolebat credere catolice fidei. Et Carulus certavit et destruxit eum et ibi fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem Sancti Stefani et predicti VII episcopi consecraverunt XL dies

'indulgentie pro singulo singulo die. Et predictus Pontifex Urbanus concessit singulo die dominico LXX dies indulgentie. Et adhuc Carulus recepit unum monticulum et episcopus Tripinus fecebat vitillam[7] (?) super illum monticulum. Et ibi Carulus fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Petri Cechi. Et post modum venit ad unum castelum quod vocatur Braitanus[8] in quo morabatur unus qui nominabatur

'ex Corinetus et erat judeus qui nolebat se converti ad fidem catolicam.

[1] This word would, perhaps, point to a title false for the inscription, but an error of the latter would make it read 'de Francia.'

[2] and [3] Ericlo (?), if so Ericolo. [4] Calepio (?).

[5] The name of the valley survives in the Ocles (Ollesa) its river. The modern name Val Camonica is generally derived from the Camuni, the tribe who formerly inhabited it.

[6] Idro. [7] Vitellarem vine. [8] Breone.

Et Carulus cretavit eccum et eum destruxit. Et ibi fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Joannis. Et predicti VII episcopi concesserunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo. Et predictus Pontifex Urbanus concessit quingentos annos omni festo principali. Et post modum venit ad unum alium montichulum et ibi fecit edificare unam ecclesiam

'ad honorem sancti Clementis. Et VII episcopi concesserunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singula die. Et predictus Pontifex Urbanus concessit 600 annos indulgentie omni die dominico. Qui predictus Carulus ivit super unum montem et ibi ecclesiam cum judeis et cum paganis fecerunt magnum bellum. Et quia perierant multi fideles et plures infideles Carulus posuit ibi unum nomen (?) quod dicitur Mortarolus.' Et adhuc ivit ad

'unam contratam que dicitur Amon.' Et ibi fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Brieli et predicti VII episcopi concesserunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singula die. Et predictus Pontifex Urbanus concessit 900 annos indulgentie omni die veneris et omni festo sancte Marie et in festo sancti Brieli. Qui dictus Carulus ivit ad unam terram que vocatur Adavona.' Et

'ibi fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Michaelis et sancti Georgii. Et post modum fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Saudri. Et predicti VII episcopi concesserunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singula die. Et predictus Pontifex Urbanus concessit 400 annos indulgentie in die sancti Saudri. Et adhuc in capite illius vallis

'fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancte Trinitatis. Per sanctum Johannem de Calla[1] et per castellum Amoni[2] vallis Oriola perdidit eorum nomen. Et adhuc predictus Carulus pertransivit montem Toni[3] et venit ad unam terram que vocatur Praxu.' Et ibi interfecit magnam quantitatem paganorum et judeorum. Et ibi predictus episcopus Tropinus posuit visilum et quam episcopi venerant

'extra ecclesiam invenerunt astam visili que ferebant. Et predicti VII episcopi concesserunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo et dominus Pontifex extraxit eorum cirotecam et fecit impleri aceta et concessit omni die sancte Marie tot annos indulgentie quot grana aceti intraverunt cirotece. Qui predictus Carulus pertransivit quandam vallem que vocatur Valiana.[4] Et venit

'ad unum montem qui vocatur Muschera[5] et venit in valem Ran-

[1] The name is preserved in the Val Montozlo church Ebbio. Close by is the Monte Pegnoso.

[2] Mortaro. [3] Daverna. [4] San ends. [5] See last page.

[6] The Tonale. [7] Pellizzano [8] Val di Sole.

[5] Muschera is said to be the name given in some old chronicles to Campiglio, which gained its present name from Charles' encampment on the broad meadows of the Giustina Alps. The 'Toni' 'Tonale' of Matteo is quoted as an authority for these statements. It is worth noting that we find elsewhere the names 'Campo' and 'Spinale' in close connection in Charles' history. *Eichardi Annales ad ann. Pertz*, p. 12: 'In Campo Spinali ad pontem

deus'et misit dicere majori judeo quod vut dabat in christianum fidem credere aut reddere castelum. Et cum audit verum respuit et ivit ultra mare. Et festo plebis Carulus dejecit castelum. Et ivit ad unum castellum quod vocatur Prisces.[1] Cujus castelli erat dominus unus qui nominabatur Catinius judeus qui conversus fuit ad Christi fidem. Et Carulus dejecit castelum. Et fecit edificare unam ecclesiam ad honorem sancti Zenonis. Et predicti VII episcopi concederunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singula die. *Et ascendit ad ecclesiam Sancti Stefani et baptizaverat omnem gentem. Et predicti VII episcopi concederunt XL dies indulgentie pro singulo singula die.*

Antonius de Solario habuit gratiam de 1500 annis indulgentie pro ecclesia sancti Stefani de Rondena omni die dominico prime septembris et omni festo principali quia stetit septem annis (1) secum pro suo damicello. Predictus Carulus explevit convertire omnes paganos et judeos ad ecclesiam sancti Stefani. Et ibi dimisit unum librum in quo continebat omnia que

Occurit per universum. Et post modum recessit cum sua gente et ivit in Blaviam.[2] *Carulus Imperator et Pontifex Urbanus et pramminati septem Episcopi concederunt supranominatam indulgentiam pronominatis ecclesiis sub anno domini nostri Jesu Christi currentibus quatuorcentum-vigintinovem.*'

An inscription almost similar, but wanting the passages printed in italics, and with a few verbal alterations, exists also at Pellizzano.

Several difficulties in this curious inscription will at once strike the reader. For a moment he may be disposed to fancy that it records a joint expedition of Pope and Emperor, and, boldly reading Adrianus for Urbanus, to believe that the events recorded all took place during Charles' Lombard campaign, circa A.D. 780. But, so far as I know, there is no record of Adrian having ever been with Charles in North Italy; and the gift of indulgences had not become common at this period.

It is most probable that events separated by several centuries, the foundation of the churches and the privileges subsequently granted them, are here lumped together. The Urban of the inscription may very likely be Urban II., who, wanting money for the first crusade, was very ready to grant indulgences. The date of the inscription is unintelligible as it stands, but it is almost certain that the 'thousand' has dropped out, and thus we should read 1429.

Mr. Ball speaks of the inscription recording a privilege granted by Charles and 'the reigning Pope Eugenius.' He does not remember whether

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venit in loco qui dicitur Cangi." To which the editor adds, "Cheny in Lotharingia ville parva prope Bingium ad Rhenum. Vetigni a septentrione Remorum mentio et ab oriente Agendici (Sensii)."

[1] Val Rendena. [2] Friesen. [3] Bavaria (?).

is not the Pope's name. It may be from the fresco (see text) near the inscription. Eugenius IV. was on the Papal throne in A.D. 1431.

'The picturesque frescoes on the south wall which the story of Charles' campaign in Italy, as well as the language, leads me to imagine that some earlier pictures must have been in part copied. The existence of "pagans" in these valleys up to a late period is a well authenticated fact. I am glad to be able to quote an interesting passage bearing on this subject from an article on Bagolino, by Cav. G. Rosa, in the Bollettino of the Brescian Branch of the Italian Alpine Club.

'Questi monti sono appendici delle alpi Retie, e furono rifugio al fiore delle colonie unite ed etrusche in seguito alle invasioni, prima galliche indi cenomane. Nelle alpi si posero a lato le genti silvestri primitive e si coltivarono le arti metallurgiche ed edificative. Ai romani opposero tale resistenza che 45 anni a. C., Bruto, scrivendone a Cicerone, li disse i più bellicosi degli uomini (*bellicosissimi hominum*), condizione furono definitivamente sottomessi 15 anni a. C. e resi tributari a Brescia. Nei trofei romani sono nominati i *Camuni*, indi i *Trumpilini*, poi i *Venosti*, fra i soggiogati, e rami di questi Venosti dovette essere nell' attuale valle di Sabbio ove sta Bagolino. Giacchè ivi vocano ancora i nomi di Avenù, Lavenù, Savenù. Via traverso legavano allora assai più che adesso i popoli di queste valli confederate contro i dominatori del piano. I romani, dopo il conquisto, ferirono in capo alle valli stazioni militari con torri di rifugio, come usarono i russi nel Caucaso, per vigilare gli schiavi alle miniere, e sicurare le vie, ma lasciarono liberi i reggimenti comunali. Quando poi Costantino preferì l'alleanza dei cristiani e fece obbligatorio il cristianesimo, le valli più elevate non stettero a questa nuova forma di romanismo, e sino al predominio dei Franchi, in qualche luogo serbarono i riti antichi di *Saturno*, di *Venere*, di *Tor*, di *Bergimo*, riti che l' ignoranza poscia confuse colle diavolerie streghesche. I luoghi elevati e remoti dove rifuggirono le reliquie di que' riti rotusti, si ricordano ancora col nome di *Pogi*. Alle fonti più meridionali della Grigna trovansi l'orto dei *Pagani* ed il dosso dei *Pagani*, dove sono ossa ed oggetti romani, e tronchi fracidi di larici in un laghetto. A Bagolino è la *via pagana*, *rovu pagana*; a Storo rimpetto *orgosi* scuta la *corsa pagana*.

'I gruppi federativi dei popoli alpini ebbero sempre costituzioni liberi. Le loro abitazioni di legno e coperte di paglia o di *scandole*, ed i frequenti fuochi per la siderurgia vi produssero fieri incendi, i quali e le inondazioni distrussero la massima parte dei loro documenti antichi. Nondimeno rimase tanto da segnalare sicuramente della loro vita libera perpetua e forma repubblicana. Il documento di Valle Sabbia che dice del palazzo fabbricato a Clusone nel 1068 pel Consiglio federale o delle Vicinie, quello del 1086 che avvenne il luogo del Consiglio ed i Consoli di Lodrone, le quattro carte nell' archivio di Breggo del 1196 che nominano Sindaci e Consoli di Vicinie, bastano ad assicurare che anche Bagolino, più grosso che quei co-

in, arpa avuto sino d' allora rappresentanza elettiva. E la via del palazzo si accenna ad antica magione pubblica.'

In Miss Busk's 'Valleys of Tirol,' p. 305, will be found mention of executions for witchcraft, near the Tonale Pass, in the 17th and 18th centuries, in which some of the last of the pagans may be supposed to have perished. Miss Busk derived her information from another pamphlet of Chev. Rosa, which I have not seen.

The same gentlemen have also sent me a description of the 'Dance of Death' of San Vigilio. Beginning on the left, the subjects arrange themselves in the following order:—

1. Three skeletons; one seated on a rude throne formed of two lofty steps and blowing the trumpets; the other two with musical instruments at their mouths. Beneath is written—

> In sunt[1] la morte che porto corona
> Sonte signor de ogni persona
> La cosa son forte e dura
> Che trapasso le porte et altro la mura
> Et son quela che fa tremar el mondo
> Revoltando tuta falsa ultimi alegrie.
> Or'lo tocco col mio strale
> Nessuna belezza fortuna niente vale.
> Non è signor richezza ni castello
> Bisogna che lor vadi in questo ballo.
> Mia figura e peccator contemplerai
> Mirelo a mi fo di cerai.
> Non offendere a dio per tal sorte
> Che al transire[2] non trovi la morte;
> Che più oltre non me impazo in lo' et in note
> Che l'anima lego al grufon eternale.
> E come fu a cerai favorato
> Cosi harai cerai pagato.

2. Jesus crucified.

> O peccator più non peccar non più
> Che 'l tempo fuge et tu non te n'avedi
> De la tua morte che certeza ai tu?
> Tu sei forsi sbi stramo et non ly credi.
> Deh ricorri col core al bon Jesu
> Ki del tuo fallo perdonanza chieli
> Vedi che in croce la sua testa inchina
> Per abrazar l'anima tua tapidina.
> O peccatore pensa de matel
> La mo è morto ni che son signor di ley.

3. Death and the Pope.

> O sumo pontifice de la cristiana fede
> Christo è morto come un vile.
> A lui che tu abbia de San Piero el manto
> Acceptar bisogna de la morte il guanto.

[1] Sono. [2] Morire. [3] Andare.

4. Death and a Cardinal.

In questa balla si vono[1] intrare
Là andarassu segnire el suo signor honore,
Poi che 'l nostro prim parente Adam è morto
Si che a to cardinale no te fuss torto.

5. Death and a Bishop.

Morte cosi fu ordinata
In ogni persona far la entrata,
Si che spirtuso mio lassesto
È giunto il tempo de arbandonar el mondo.

6. Death and a Priest.

O sacerdote mio riverendo
Donar loco lo me intendo,
A ben che di Christo sei vicario
Mai la morte fa diverso.

7. Death and a Monk.

Buon partito pigliasti o patre spirituale
A fuzer del mondo el pericoloso stratu,
Per Paulina tua poi esser alla sicura
Ma contra di me non avrai scriptura.

8. Death, carrying a tablet with the motto 'Passa la fine,' seizes the Emperor.

O massimo imperator sulli che li altri pon
Che a contrura umana la morte non a pon.

9. Death, with a banner 'Mors est ultima finis,' seizes a King.

Tu sei signor de gente e de paesi o serenu regale
Ne altro teco porti che il bene e il male.

10. Death, with a banner 'Memoriae novissima tua et in aeternum non peccabis,' leads off as to a dance a Queen.

In pace portarai gentil regina
Che ho per comandamento di non contrar fatina.

11. Death leads off a Duke.

O dura signor gentile
Giunta a to sin col fuel[2] sottile.

12. Death and a Doctor.

Non ti vale scientia ne dottrina
Contra de la morte non val medicina.

13. Death and a Soldier.

O tu homo gagliardus forte
Niente vale l'armur tue contra la morte.

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[1] Bisogna. [2] Lettera.

14. Death and the Miser.

O tu ricco del mondano avuti
Che in tuo cuoreo la morte non vuoi durare.

15. Death and a young Gallant.

De le vostre superbie fidar no te vole
Però la morte ogni hor with tole.

16. Death, carrying a flag with the quotation—

Fedi levatemo ogni nostri mesfet patiti
Che oppresi il nostro nemici ci riposo—

slightly altered from Petrarch, hauls off a Beggar.

Non sentio ho miseria alla o povertà sappo
A la morte, che pietà non li da scampo.

17. Death and an Abbess.

Per fuire il piacer mondani molto fatta sei,
Ma da la dura morte scapar no poi da lei.

18. Death and a Lady. Verses illegible.

19. Death, with the motto 'Omnia fert ætas, perficit omnia tempus,' drags along a struggling old woman. Verses illegible.

20. A little Death dancing with a child. In the centre a staff with two scrolls: on one, 'Dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum;' on the other, 'A far bene non dimora, Mentre hai tempo e l'hora.'

21. A winged Death, galloping on a white horse, with bow stretched in act to shoot at the groups previously described. Inscriptions illegible.

22. A square red shield with the lines—

Arrangelo Michel de l'anime difensore,
Intercede pro nobis al Creatore.

The archangel St. Michael with a bloody sword, and above him an angel who holds in his hands on a cloth a beaming and beautiful soul. Beneath is written—

Morte stirnir non poi chi sempre vive.

23. A winged demon; above him the inscription 'Io seguito la morte e questo mio guardiano, d'onde e scripto, li mali operatori chi meno al inferno.' He carries on his back a large open volume, in which are written the seven deadly sins. Beneath the 'Dance of Death' are allegorical representations of the seven deadly sins and the date 1539.

[1] Non puoi.

APPENDIX E.

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE BRENTA GROUP.

There has been much confusion of late years as to the names to be given to the two highest summits of this range, which stand respectively N. and S.W. of the Bocca di Brenta.

The old and very incorrect Government Map of Tyrol gives the name of Cima Tosa to the N. peak, and none to the S. and highest. Mr. Ball, the first mountaineer who explored this country, adhered, on his first visit, to the name given by the Survey to the N. peak, and to the S. gave the name of Cima di Brenta or Brenta Alta. Lieutenant Payer followed Mr. Ball's example in his article on the Bocca di Brenta in the fifth volume of the Austrian Alpine Club's Publications.

When, however, in 1865, Mr. Ball made from Molveno the first ascent of the S. peak, he found that his guide, a native of that village, knew it as 'La Tosa.' Mr. Ball therefore assumed in his last edition (he proved to give the collective name of Brenta to the chain, and to call the S. peak the Cima Tosa; but he ignored the difficulty that the almost equally important N. summit, hitherto known to chartographers and English climbers as the Cima Tosa, was left nameless.

In this state of things the attention of the newly formed Trentine Alpine Society was called to the subject, and they promptly appointed a committee to inquire into and consider the local usage. The results of this inquiry are now shortly stated.

The Val di Brenta gives its name to the group. The point S. of the Bocca di Brenta is known as La Tosa throughout the country. The peak N. of the Bocca (the Cima Tosa of the map) is called in Val Brenta the Cima di Brenta. The following names are wrongly given in the Austrian map:—Val Astiella for Vallesinella, Val Agnola for Val Agola, Val Dalpon for Val d'Algone. The names Bocca di Vallazza, Bocca della Vallesinella, Bocca dei Camosci, and Passo d'Ambies, suggested for the passes discovered of late years by English climbers, are, as I understand, accepted. The Bocca della Vallesinella is the pass first called Bocca di Tosa by Mr. Turkett.

Some curious etymological details are added to the report. Tosa, supposed by Mr. Ball to be equivalent to 'virgin,' is stated to be a contraction of tosata = shaven, a title derived from the bald, rounded aspect of the peak when seen from the east. 'Brenta' is a local word in the Sarca valley for a shallow vessel used for soup in cottages: thence it is applied to the stagnant pools or tarns common in the dolomite glens. In this way the word gets attached to the glen itself, and finally to the peak above it. Cima

di Brenta is, it would seem, therefore, the Italian equivalent for Kesselkopf.

There was one other quarter to which it was natural to look for information—the officers at the head of the Viennese Ordnance Survey Department who have recently re-surveyed the Trentino. But every application for information—although made to the Head of the Department through influential Austrian friends, and in the name of the English Alpine Club—was met by a refusal, or a promise broken as soon as made. I finally sent an extract from the old Government Map, with a request that the names adopted in the new survey for the two chief peaks of the Brenta group might be written across it. Even this the office declined to do. Such a refusal was the more unexpected as the French and Swiss Engineers have always been ready to give every information, even where there was real prospect of rivalry between the private work in hand and the Government survey.

From photographs I have seen of some portions of the new map, I feel sure that although much too large for general use it will be valuable to explorers, and I recommend every mountaineer intending to visit the Trentino or the Italian Tyrol to inquire through Messrs. Stanford if it is yet out, and if possible to purchase the sheets he will require.

Time has not verified the official statement made in March last that the sheets containing the Brenta group 'would be published in a few days,' but they may probably be looked for within the next year or two. If, when they appear, the nomenclature adopted proves different in any way from that here given, General Dobner, the head of the Department, will be alone to blame for any confusion to which the discrepancy may give rise. I should have been glad to follow the authority of his map; but the nomenclature I have used, coming as it does from the very best local authorities, can scarcely, if the engineers have gone for information to the same source, differ widely from theirs.

I have taken the heights in my map from the reductions from the Kataster of Mr. Ball and from a table contained in the 'Annuario' for 1874 of the Trentino Alpine Society. The peaks are mostly derived from the latter, the villages from the former authority.

I may mention here that I have been unable to adopt the heights given for the Primiero peaks in the same 'Annuario.' The Cimon della Pala is there set down as 3,550 metres = 11,647 feet, and the Palle di San Martino as 2,953 metres = 9,688 feet. The first of these figures is as much over as the other is under the mark. In the same list the height of the Sass Maor is probably pretty correctly given as 10,646 feet, and that of the C. della Rosetta as 10,264 feet.

APPENDIX F.

TYROL v. TIROL.

I DESIRE perhaps briefly to notice this lately mised question of orthography, and to explain the grounds on which I decline to follow the example set by two authoresses, who seem anxious to introduce into our literature the confusion which already prevails in Germany as to the correct spelling of the name of this province. If it could be proved that 'Tirol' was the invariable local and German spelling, as Miss Pack seems to fancy it is, there would at least be a good argument for changing our present practice. But I am informed by a gentleman living near Innsbruck that in the old histories he has consulted the form used is 'Tyrol.' I have myself noted, during the last few weeks, the spelling adopted in the German books I have had occasion to refer to; and, so far from 'Tirol' being universal or 'Tyrol' obsolete, I find the latter form preferred by Herr von Sonklar, Herr Lichenthal, Herr Studer, Herr Silvestri, the late Professor Theobald, and the 'Alpenpost;' in a set of views published at Leipzig is one of 'Schloss Tyrol,' and in another set published at Partenkirchen (Bavaria) the 'y' is also throughout adopted. In maps the balance of authority is for 'Tyrol.' I may cite Anich and Huber's, 1774; Pfaundler's, 1788; Schwatz's, 1795; Unterberger's Innsbruck, 1825; Artaria's, 1840; and the 24-sheet Government map of the whole country. They can all be found in one box (No. 21) in the Geographical Society's Map-room.

I do not of course question the fact that the spelling 'Tirol' is now very frequently preferred abroad both in maps and books; but the assertion that it is the more ancient form, and the one exclusively sanctioned by local use, seems to be wholly unsupported by evidence.

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Although the orography and history of the Caucasus have been engaged by various authors, information concerning its natural features, as to the appearance of this colossal country and its people, is still very scanty and defective; and until the summer of 1868 no Englishman had visited the most interesting of the chains, and its two most magnificent mountains, Kazbek and Elbrus, were still unascended. One object of the journey described in the present volume was to explore the central portion of the chain and to effect the ascents of Kazbek and Elbrus. The writer also has endeavoured to illustrate, as far as the resources of the country in some of the places visited would allow, the form of the peaks, the nature of the snow and glaciers, and the character of the forest and flora, as well as to draw a general comparison between the Caucasus and the Alps. In addition, however, to carrying out this part of their design, the travellers, after a rapid journey through Syria, in the course of which they visited Damascus and Lesh, Palmyra, recently brought into notice by the recent identification of the ruined towns still existing in Moab with the cities of the Amorite Kingdom, laid waste by the Israelites. The writer has no hesitation in expressing his conviction that this theory is well-founded, and that the ruins of the so-called "Giant Cities" are in the main those of towns built by Arab races, and not by Cyclopean or Pelasgic builders of remote antiquity.

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